







## *THE LIVING THOUGHTS LIBRARY*

SCHOPENHAUER	by THOMAS MANN
DARWIN	by JULIAN HUXLEY
MONTAIGNE	by ANDRÉ GIDE
TOLSTOI	by STEFAN ZWEIG
THOREAU	by THEODORE DREISER
ROUSSEAU	by ROMAIN ROLLAND
NIETZSCHE	by HEINRICH MANN
MAZZINI	by IGNAZIO SILONE
SPINOZA	by ARNOLD ZWEIG
VOLTAIRE	by ANDRÉ MAUROIS
MARX	by LEON TROTZKY
PAINE	by JOHN DOS PASSOS
JEFFERSON	by JOHN DEWEY
EMERSON	by EDGAR LEE MASTERS
PASCAL	by FRANÇOIS MAURIAC
MACHIAVELLI	by COUNT CARLO SPORZA
CONFUCIUS	by ALFRED DOEBLIN
KANT	by JULIEN BENDA
FRÉUD	by ROBERT WAELDER
SAINT PAUL	by JACQUES MARITAIN





SPINOZA

THE LIVING THOUGHTS OF

# SPINOZA

PRESENTED BY

ARNOLD ZWEIG



CASSELL  
AND COMPANY, LIMITED  
LONDON, TORONTO, MELBOURNE  
AND SYDNEY

BARUCH (Benedict de) SPINOZA was born in Amsterdam on November 24, 1632. His parents belonged to the community of Jewish emigrants from Spain and Portugal who had fled from Catholic persecution and sought refuge in the Netherlands. Nurtured on Jewish theology and philosophy, his whole outlook was changed by his discovery of Descartes' writings. His unorthodox views led, in 1656, to a sentence of excommunication by the Jewish authorities. The years that followed were devoted to concentrated thought and study, and to writing his *Treatise, Ethics*, and other philosophical works. He derived a modest income from grinding optical lenses, at which he was extremely skilful. In 1673 he refused an invitation to become professor of philosophy at Heidelberg. Spinoza died of consumption at The Hague on February 21, 1677, aged forty-four.

---

*The Living Thoughts Library*

is being published in Argentina, Bulgaria, Canada, Czecho-slovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Holland, Hungary, Jugoslavia, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Sweden, The United States of America

Translation of the Introductory Essay by Eric Katz and Barrows Mussey.  
The selections are from *Improvement of the Understanding, Ethics and Correspondence* of Benedict de Spinoza translated by R. H. M. Elwes,  
published by M. Walter Dunne, New York, 1901

FIRST EDITION - - OCTOBER 1939

SECOND EDITION - - MAY 1943

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
LOWE AND BRIDGEMAN PRINTERS LTD., LONDON, N.W.10



# SPINOZA

BY

ARNOLD ZWEIG

## I

### THE BACKGROUND

#### I. HOLLAND, THE CHAMPION

**I**N AMSTERDAM IN 1632, THE CHILD BARUCH SPINOZA first saw the light of day, in an epoch full of great advances and world-wide growth in the realm of free thought. Charles I., of the House of Stuart, still reigned in England, but already Oliver Cromwell was at the gate: the eleven years of English republicanism fell within the lifetime of Spinoza. When that phenomenon occurred and a European people sat in judgment upon its king, and decapitated him for his misrule, Spinoza was a young Talmudic scholar, seventeen years old. The Republic was destroyed, Charles II. mounted the English throne, but the scaffold of Whitehall was never more to be put out of existence.

Holland's other neighbour which influenced Spinoza's destiny, royal France, was at that time living under her two greatest political figures: Cardinal-Minister Richelieu and Louis XIV. In the shadow of these great men the life of Spinoza ran its course. He never went beyond the borders of his native Holland.

Originally the Netherlands consisted of seventeen

provinces, which until shortly before had been part of the Spanish Empire. Through industry, commerce and shipping they had become great, an important power in Europe, and geographically and politically much more powerful than their size, including what is now Belgium, would lead us to suppose. That wild intolerance with which Spanish Catholicism tried to stamp out Protestant freedom of thought in the Netherlands can be rightly understood only to-day, when we see another example of intolerance attempting to wipe out all freedom of thought and the right to democratic criticism.

The Spanish government of the time of Spinoza, like the Fascist governments of to-day, remained insensible of the damage it inflicted upon itself. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands separated themselves from Spain at Utrecht. And again we, who are witnesses of Spanish heroism against terror, superior force and dictatorship, can appreciate fully the eighty-year-long war which the Protestants waged for their independence, with multitudes never shrinking from the supreme sacrifice. Yes, and by virtue of the same moral and physical courage with which the Dutch people survived a war against an Empire, they live in independence and liberty to-day. Beyond this, they were able to render service of tremendous importance to humanity, by becoming a refuge for all who were persecuted, and for the progressive and libertarian spirit in general. Their poetry and music stood in the front rank, and their painting reached those summits marked by the names of Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Vermeer van Delft. The Dutch, who were victorious in their constant struggle against the sea, and who, because of their tenacity and love of freedom, were able to master this wild element, had their great days in those years under William III. of Orange and Jan de Witt. They created the Dutch East India Company ;

they settled on the North American continent, and founded the settlement of New Amsterdam, which is now New York. They took possession of the southern tip of Africa, and founded Cape Town. The Dutchman Tasman circumnavigated Australia, and discovered New Zealand and Tasmania. And the great admirals Tromp and De Ruyter destroyed not only Spanish fleets, but English as well. Sometimes the Protestant states were friends of the young Republic, sometimes they were at war with it; and Holland's expansion was checked by the Puritan revolution, which gave England a new upsurge, and placed a general of genius, Oliver Cromwell, at the helm of Great Britain. After the Navigation Act, Holland had to relinquish first place in the competition for shipping and the supremacy of the high seas. But there still remained sufficient room for the energy and richness of its seven provinces. The Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War and at the same time created free Switzerland, sealed the defeat of Spain in 1648. And although France under Louis XIV. now became one of the principal enemies who begrudged the young Republic its calm in the shadow of its dikes and dams, it was no longer possible to loosen its foundations. Batavians and Friesians, who had been brought up Roman Catholics and whose spiritual depth had grown through Christianity, affiliated themselves with the Reformation, freedom of thought, and the struggle of human knowledge against feudal privileges and scholastic guardianship.

## 2. SPAIN, THE ADVERSARY

The adversary of the new era was embodied in the totalitarian state of the Spanish Hapsburgs and the Spanish Church. It was true, and a known fact, that the sun never set on their empire. The influx of gold from the American

colonies deceived them about the importance of Spanish industry and agriculture ; and their infantry, the best in the world, led them to underestimate the strength of movements that represented tendencies foreign to them. Of all the nations of Europe the population of the Iberian peninsula was the most mixed. The Roman military immigration was spread upon a basic stratum of the original Iberian race—the remnants of which are now known as the Basques—after Spain, in the Punic wars, had been wrested from the Phoenicians, who had incorporated it for a thousand years into the great Semitic culture of the Mediterranean basin. The Romans were succeeded by a thin layer of Visigothic and Vandal nobility, whose power broke down before the onrush of Arabs and Moors, who from the very beginning were strongly intermingled with Jews, since on their way from Arabia they had absorbed numerous Jewish tribes of North Africa. For centuries the culture of the Spanish peninsula now remained Arabic-Jewish, therefore again Semitic—which culture ranked highest in the Europe of that time in the pursuit of the sciences, the fine arts, the renaissance of ancient Greek philosophy, in medicine and engineering, as well as in commerce and financial matters. Their tolerance in matters of faith was exemplary, and survived to the last in those parts of the country which had remained Moorish. But in the wake of the general reversal of Islamism, best known through the Crusades, the supremacy of the Christian kingdoms of the north-western part of the peninsula spread again to its southernmost point. And the more Catholic Europe became, the more intolerant did it grow. Since the conquering knighthood had to find a means to disown or expatriate those who, though Jews or Arabs by birth, had embraced Catholicism, they invented the principle of racial purity, and its tool, the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition. With its help they succeeded in a hundred years'

fight of the powerful against the down-trodden, and expelled the Jews, Moors and Neo-Christians (Marranos) from their Spanish homeland. With them spiritual freedom, the will to think, industrial enterprise, arts and sciences left the land, which from now on was abandoned to the economic exploitation of hundreds of thousands of Germans and Italians. This took place towards the end of the fifteenth century, while the ancient Byzantine-Christian realm went over to the Turks, and Christopher Columbus, financed and accompanied by Jews, perhaps himself of Jewish descent (compare Blasco Ibañez), undertook his great and hazardous enterprise in search of the western sea route to India, whereby he accidentally discovered America. Thousands of sorrowful and grief-stricken Jewish families left the Iberian peninsula, and soon all the large European ports, Leghorn, Salonica, Hamburg and Amsterdam, began to flourish. The newcomers everywhere supported an anti-Spanish front, especially in formerly Spanish countries. According to their background, however, they remained Spanish-Jewish aristocrats or bourgeois. Their style of thinking was determined by the same zeal for absolute orthodoxy that had been the mark of the Catholic Church in Spain. They feared and hated doubt, scepticism and heresy as much as their former Christian countrymen: The spirit of freedom which was blowing through Europe threatened their community with dissolution, and as they had suffered terrible persecutions for over three generations because of their origin, that community seemed to them, the bearers of the Jewish faith and the Messianic promise to Israel, to have a value second to nothing. Thus they continued the fight which had been begun in Spain against critical intelligence and unbiased investigation, the inheritance from freer and more fortunate times.

One of the families thus transplanted from Portugal

and Spain to Amsterdam, bearing the germ of scientific thinking in its blood, was the family of d'Espinoza or de Spinoza. There had been cardinals and soldiers among its ancestors.

### 3. THE BREATH OF THE INTELLECT

A surge of the intellect was then mightily stirring the European atmosphere. Its impulse had been furnished by humanism, the result of that Italian Renaissance in which mediæval man had been destroyed to bring forth modern man. Spanish circumnavigators of the earth had proved its spherical shape and had helped to replace the Ptolemaic system with the cosmos of Copernicus. The Secretary of the Florentine Republic, Niccolo Machiavelli, had described with powerful realism the nature of man, of power, of the State, and of the forces of society, which made politics what they were. The German monk, Martin Luther, had added up the total of century-old discontents with the Church, and had opposed the hierarchy of the Church with the doctrine of direct communion with God, based upon the Bible and a free confessional congregation—until he had betrayed it to the German princelings. But in those countries that followed him and his Protestantism, spiritual freedom and empirical research were possible from then on in place of servitude and blind faith. Soon the explosive effects of thought shook all the structures of ideas which had been created according to authoritarian blueprints. Giordano Bruno, an emigrant for the sake of truth and investigation, denied the authorities, taught the infinity and inexhaustibility of the universe which was governed by a universal force of evolution, and substituted for the Christian religion one of Nature, indicating that to him all religions seemed a mixture of symbols and superstitious conceptions. When, in 1600,

a defenceless prisoner in Rome, he was asked to retract these doctrines, he refused to surrender his convictions and was burned at the stake like any heretic or Marrano, thus affirming the greatness of human thinking by the sacrifice of his life. As a contrast in character and theory we may take Francis Bacon, who betrayed a friend, who was convicted of bribery, who died in 1626 Lord Chancellor and Lord Verulam, and who yet served the progress of reason as well as Bruno. By introducing the experiment in natural science, and basing knowledge upon it, he permitted conclusions to be drawn from it alone, and subjected the thinking powers of Man himself to his criticism, showing sources of error in them. He and his fellow-countryman Hobbes, who died as late as 1679, were followed by that generation of modern thinkers and scientists who were all contemporaries of Spinoza. The Italian Galileo died in 1642, the Dutchman Grotius in 1645, and the Frenchman Descartes in 1650. The year 1642 was that in which the Englishman Newton was born, and in 1646 the German Leibniz. Galileo was the founder of modern astronomy, Grotius founded international law, Descartes philosophy, Newton physics with all its branches, and Leibniz founded higher mathematics and the theory that the universe consisted of monads, for which we may safely read ions to-day. In the same year as Spinoza, 1632, the Dutchman Leeuwenhoek was born, who was the first to observe the world of microbes under a microscope, and who prepared the way for modern biology. Thus, on the threshold between two eras we look into the world of Spinoza, our backs still shadowed by Yesterday, while we are already facing To-day—an Eternal To-day.

## II

### THE MAN

#### I. THE DECISIVE YEARS

THE POETS HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN, AND SIGMUND FREUD has splendidly confirmed the motto with which Rudyard Kipling prefaced his last work : " Give me the first seven years of a child, and you may have the rest."

Young Baruch Spinoza grew up in the Ghetto of Amsterdam, which had but recently taken its character from the newcomers from Spain and Portugal. Among streets where brown-eyed people talked Ladino stood the house of Miguel de Spinoza, a prosperous merchant, who made use of connections with the entire world. He was a kind father and a respected citizen. His father had held offices of honour in the congregation, as he did. His piety was of a liberal sort, generous and by no means narrow-minded. He soon recognized the unusual gifts of his son Baruch, and procured the best teachers for him, who brought him a wide knowledge of the sources of Judaism. But this education of the spirit could be fruitful only after the development of the complex of human proclivities that preceded it. Whether the will of a child is broken through beatings or the severity of teachers, whether the outside world has temptations for the adolescent or seems to repel him, whether he can follow the example of his father or must revolt against him, all depends on the manner in which he will later inwardly digest the knowledge offered.



And death had been striking all around Spinoza's powerful father. He brought death to those he loved, who were most closely connected with him, who were his dearest : his wives. When little Baruch came to know his environment, there was already a half-sister, Rebecca, to whom he attached himself as children will. But Rebecca's mother had been his father's first wife, and had died. He, Baruch, still had his mother. He grew up under her protection. But when he was six years old, she too died. After a proper interval, the father married a third wife. There was no need for Baruch to wonder what her fate would be. The sinister truth that a man may bring death to his wives, and that he may even survive his children had stamped itself deeply on his mind ; when his father died, Baruch was a little over twenty years old, and had already buried four of his brothers and sisters. The inward ties which still bound him to his mother, who had been resting so long in the cemetery of Ouwerkerke, dead among the dead, but whose memory he cherished as if she were still alive—these constant inner ties to his mother can be seen in the fact that at the time when he was forced to leave the paternal home and also his larger paternal home, the Ghetto, he made his residence opposite his mother's home, the cemetery of Ouwerkerke. From that moment the estrangement from the world of his father began to grow. Apart from marriage and children, the father's crest bore two devices : Jewish orthodoxy and the business acumen of the merchant. Against both Spinoza defended himself in his own way ; both he opposed ; he was not passionately revolutionary, but calm, feminine, definite. Through his power of reasoning he fell into an ever-increasing opposition to the world of Judaism ; he was able to turn away from the commercial world by accepting life pensions which friends or the head of the State granted him. Besides, he earned small sums from a handicraft, the grinding

of optical lenses, a favourite occupation of the time. It is reported that he was indeed able to put his mind on the economic side of life, but not for his own benefit; that as a boy he collected a debt for his father, and in spite of his youth and certain flatteries of the lady debtor he counted the sum received; there was a shortage of two ducats. And likewise is it known that in a legal fight with a disagreeable brother-in-law over an inheritance, he first wrung out his due, and then tossed him the sum he had gained. (All that he claimed of his inheritance was a bed and a curtain.) It does not make this brother-in-law more likeable when we remember that his wife, Spinoza's sister Miriam, died in childbirth. (Marriage then still endangered the life of women, and was to go on doing so until 1850, when the Viennese physician, I. P. Semmelweis, was to uncover the cause for this "fate": through the unsufficiently washed finger-nails of midwives and doctors, death was carelessly carried into the wombs of young mothers.)

Another occurrence of his youth for ever barred the way to active defiance, to revolutionary attack, to violent insurgece. He was seven years old when in the congregation of Amsterdam the dreadful fate of Gabriel or Uriel da Costa was consummated—the distinguished Portuguese Neo-Christian who would not rest in the Christian home of his parents in Lisbon until he and his mother and brothers and sisters could flee into freedom and return to Judaism. And since the power of reason and criticism in his mind did not rest, but forced him, even within Judaism, to doubt and seek certainty, this gallant man finally ended his life with a pistol shot, although he had suffered the thirty-nine lashes of the penitent and recanter, had offered himself on the threshold of the synagogue to the feet of those who would step over him, and had wished to disown all his writings and thoughts. Of what did his crime consist?

He sought the certainty of God, but the Spanish Jews were as rigid Spaniards and believers as the Spanish Christians. . . . In Holland they embraced humanism. Spinoza was to feel it one day. On the other hand, later on he was to choose the device "Caute" (Be cautious) for his crest, and this under a rose, so that whatever he sealed with it should be written *sub rosa*, under the sign of secrecy.

## 2. RESIGNATION AND RENUNCIATION

His experiences at home were supplemented by those awaiting Spinoza from without. They might have been mingled with them. But his fate manifestly prescribed a simple, straightforward line and course for this wonderful intellect. What he sought from without, secular knowledge and learning, could come to him only through the knowledge of Latin. Therefore, after a short interval with a German private tutor, he became the pupil of the best Latinist of his city, Franciscus van den Ende. This man was his complete opposite. Catholic by birth, in his youth a monk, his passionate soul drove him from the Augustines to the Jesuits, who strove, by their weapons of discipline, to recapture life for Catholicism by affirming life and penetrating it with their doctrine. But Van den Ende was too deeply permeated with the urge of the time to embrace the Jesuit world structure calmly. The pantheistic force, the seeking after the universal, forced him from Leyden to Amsterdam, where he maintained himself and a numerous family as a teacher of Latin. The Jesuits had taught him delight in the theatre; but what he produced were the comedies of Terence, and through them blows a pagan breath and the true spirit of Antiquity. No wonder that in orthodox Calvinist Amsterdam his life was a failure. As an elderly man he emigrated to Paris and, bursting with pent-up energy, took up the practice

of medicine again. But in the firmly established "baroque" of Louis XIV. he could employ his talents nowhere. An eternal rebel, he was finally involved, two years after the death of his pupil Spinoza, in a revolt of the nobility, and ended on the gallows.

In his house, his pupils, as soon as they had to some extent mastered the language of classical thinking and contemporary learning, met with the influence of Giordano Bruno, of Hobbes, and of the greatest thinker of the time, René Descartes. Beyond this Spinoza suffered the trial and temptation of winning a woman's love. He was a slender, olive-brown complexioned, well-dressed youth with a cheerful but timid nature. Van den Ende's daughter, Clara Maria, frail of body, but gifted with a brilliant intellect, assisted the father with his lessons. She was a child, eleven or twelve years old, but of great maturity of mind. She had to be childlike to make an impression upon Spinoza's timid soul, which rejected the adult world. Even in later years, a friend reports he spoke of her with great affection. He wanted to marry her. But he had fellow-pupils who were his friends, and the courtship of the most gifted of them won Clara Maria's fancy. This man, a physician and a German, well-to-do and worldly-wise, carried her off to his native Hamburg, and out of Spinoza's life. That this union turned out to be very unhappy and ended in serious discord can surprise no one.

But hereupon Spinoza withdrew even this part of his spiritual and human powers from outward life. Intellectualization alone was now his road and his opportunity, his passion and his nobility. The man Spinoza who ate and drank would always retain a virginal youthfulness. Like a boy he would take pleasure in starting fights between spiders, or throwing flies into their webs. Playing with his skill in drawing, he would portray himself as Masaniello, thus betraying the wish-phantasy of breaking out from

concealed rebellion and guarded silence into open and passionate action—because Masaniello, we know from *The Mute of Portici*, was the young fisherman who led the people of his native Naples against the Spanish viceroy, the common enemy, and so met his tragic end. Later, long after Spinoza had exchanged his first name, Baruch, for its Latin equivalent, Benedictus, and had grown accustomed to permanent poverty, he lived among the people of the lower classes, plainly dressed, simple and undemanding like these people, smoking his pipe and conversing with them to rest his mind, and living quietly in retirement in a small room which differed from those of his landlord only in a number of books—a small library. Once only did he attempt to come fervently and demonstratively out into the open to protest against murderous and ignorant barbarism and violence. That was in the summer of 1672, when he had long lived at The Hague. Armed mobs of the party of Orange assassinated the brothers De Witt, of whom Jan, the elder, stadtholder, patrician and friend of the intellect and of the sciences, was one of the most important statesmen of his time. To express his outraged protest against the slaying of this great, innocent friend, he wrote the words “*ultimi barbarorum*”—*worst of savages*—upon a sheet of paper to post on a wall the following night near the scene of the crime. But his landlord prevented him, and finally the tears of the philosophic man were victorious over the indignation: Spinoza did not go out on the street again.

He was a man of pronounced Jewish and aristocratic appearance. His well-formed, slender figure displayed a long head, lean, with curved nose, arched eyebrows, a wide, thin-lipped mouth with protruding lower lip, and, below a high forehead, great black eyes with a melancholy sparkle. He was usually portrayed with black

preacher's locks, and in later years his black habit with white bib emphasized this clerical note. But there exists also an early portrait which gives him the features of a Sephardic Grandee, altogether alien and aristocratic, with almost short hair, a small moustache and a sea-captain's beard from ear to ear, leaving the upper part of chin and cheeks exposed. Unfortunately, this portrait is not authenticated; and yet it represents a man of greater individuality than the authentic preacher's portraits with their long, beautifully waved locks, and its singularity accords best with Spinoza's origin as well as his life-work. A preacher's habit, though, would explain much that is inherent in his writings: the dogmatism, the excess of theology, a certain didactic dryness in abstractions and in his prose style, which, however, may go back to the translators whom we have to follow—for, like a preacher, he wrote exclusively in Latin.

### 3. THE BREAK WITH HIS BACKGROUND

Every great man, willingly or through expulsion, leaves the shell that housed him while he was still weak and vulnerable, still shaping himself. A second birth, as it were, is necessary to give him independence, impetus, self-reliance. With some geniuses this re-birth is seen in some insignificant change of location: when Goethe, for instance, removed to Weimar from Frankfurt, or travelled to Italy from Weimar, or when Bonaparte was sent from Corsica to the mainland. In some others this renaissance is accompanied by eruptions—for the quiet Spinoza, eruptions with the sound of ram's horns, the mystic burning of black altar candles, and the intonation of resounding formulas, Old Testament in spirit and style. If there had been nothing but orthodox Jewish congregations in the world, this curse would really have meant something—at

the very least, a wandering life, free as a bird, and starving. But since the Christian city of Amsterdam with its ancient gables and canals was spread around the Portuguese congregation of Amsterdam, and villages lay at a short distance where even the Amsterdam city government was powerless, the anathema in the beautiful Portuguese synagogue had for Spinoza the importance only of an outward, dramatic representation of what had long been consummated within him. In July 1656, two years after his father's death, and one day after Rembrandt's declaration of bankruptcy, this expulsion came upon him. It was preceded by protracted attempts, first to discover his theories about the existence of God and the obligations of orthodox Judaism, followed by conferences with the rabbis who loved or had loved him, and who did not realize that with the offer of an annual salary of a thousand guilders they were trying to bribe him to play at being a Jew, just as formerly in Spain Jews had played at being Christians. The break occurred only after the exhaustion of these efforts and the decline of his father's house.

Because Spinoza had within him extraordinary and deeply rooted ties to his Jewish extraction and education, he would hardly have voluntarily turned his back on Judaism, that imperilled community, had the community granted him independence in thought and conduct of life. For he never ceased to occupy himself with the Hebrew language and its grammatical niceties, as his literary remains bear witness; philosophical connoisseurs are safe in maintaining that part of his thinking can be wholly understood only by translating his Latin terminology back into the Hebrew from which it sprang. Judaism, however, always meant the observance of numerous prayers and laws governing the day, the week and the year, which an independent and absolute spirit could observe no longer after they had lost meaning for him, just as it would be impossible

for him to exchange his calendar for that of the ancient Semitic lunar year and to date his letters from the year 5420 after the Creation of the World, because he knew this world had been standing or running a few million years longer than that.

Nevertheless the world of Judaism, as Spinoza came to know it, was full of meaning. As a mighty tree full of sap, it towered into the present, except for the Jesuit schools of the Thomistic philosophy and canonistic conception, the only surviving tree of that luxuriant grove of ancient philosophy which once flourished in Memphis and Thebes, Syracuse and Athens, Antioch and Alexandria, Jerusalem and Pumbedita. The thinking and learning which were taught there were ancient, and the universe was Jewish, and the methods of dialectical argument were products of that great epoch in which the human intellect learned to reason logically, to recognize cause and effect, instead of analogy and unity of sound, as the basis for research. The subject-matter moved on the same level, since outworn: the Holy Books of the Old Testament, supplemented and interpreted by the oral teachings and their continuation, the rabbinical literature. In this book it was already recognized how much the basis of Judaism was in need of enrichment through contemporary philosophy; platonic and aristotelian tributaries were admitted and incorporated in the Talmudic canal system, and, finally, Hispano-Jewish thinking left no lack of fresh sources and neat sluices.

Nevertheless, with this knowledge and education Spinoza was determined to observe things directly, to illuminate with reason the texts, even the holiest, and to force his own path through the thicket of opinions by submersion into the real nature of God and the world. His own excommunication coincided with the expulsion of Juan de Prado, who was accused of offending God by making him equivalent to Nature. This was thought like Spinoza's, only less



guardedly voiced, and it would be only natural if the younger Spinoza had learned from the older man. He would still remain the person he was. All the more Jewish in its radicalism was his silent but inexorable renunciation of his descent. After the attempted dagger-thrust by an "avenger of Israel," and the ban pronounced in his absence, his circle consisted exclusively of Christian scholars and Dutch sectarians, so-called Rhijnsburgers or Collegians, who were regarded with suspicion and antipathy by the official Calvinist Church, even though it was not in a position to persecute them.

#### 4. THE SILENT IN THE LAND

The history of Christian sectarianism is as old as that of the Church itself. The violent differences between the Mother Church and the schismatics have always been the same. The sects will not forgo the shaping of life, of real, everyday life according to the impulses of Christianity. Thus, the orders for monks and nuns sprang into existence within Catholicism. Within Protestantism they appeared as Peasant Revolution and Anabaptism. Both met bloody extermination (like Uriel da Costa); Martin Luther, the new Pope, himself stirred up the fire of annihilation. From then on the sects became pietistic, retiring within, dedicated to contemplation and the secret interpretation of the Scriptures—like Spinoza. The conflict with the outside world went on noiselessly; each party left aggression to the opposition. To be satisfied with a minute portion of outward life avoids offering unprotected flanks.

The Silent in the Land also resembled Spinoza economically: they managed with a minimum of economic foundation as small craftsmen or traders, while he, as we have already seen, lived by the grinding of lenses and on small pensions which were granted him first by the bequest of

a friend, and afterwards through the generous insight of Stadtholder de Witt, whose friend he was.

These Rhijnsburgers fitted splendidly into the flat green Dutch landscape with its bright sky and many waterways ; and so did Spinoza with his gentle manner and his medicine of rose leaves, with which he combated his cough. The keenness of his perception and deduction was but strengthened by the landscape. Outwardly he did not differ from his companions. He shared their joys and sorrows ; his reserved intellectual manner had its counterpart in their Low-German silence and composure. A conversation about the sermon, a consolation concerning the Beyond, after just and quiet life, an admonition to the children whose blond heads peopled the homes, a pipe of tobacco smoked in the peace of evening before the door—this was Spinoza's intercourse with his landlords in the later years of his life.

He actually covered only a very small radius in his travels : for five years he lived in Ouwerkerke ; then, in 1660, he moved into the citadel of the Rhijnsburgers, the suburb of Rhijnsburg, close to the university town of Leyden, which residence he exchanged three years later for the little village of Voorburg, near the capital, The Hague ; and from there he moved to The Hague itself—perhaps to be nearer De Witt. In the beautiful spacious city with its many little woods and its great square-embanked sea-basin he lived first on the Veerkay at the house of a brave lady who in her youth had rescued the great jurist Grotius from imprisonment ; later he lived on the Paviljoensgracht with the portrait painter Van der Spijck, whose picture of Spinoza is the best likeness we possess. He painted him in his thirty-ninth year. The room which Spinoza inhabited there, with its wood panelling and beamed ceiling and the little mirror next to the bright window, was destined to be his death-chamber.

Spinoza's health may very likely have always been frail. Tuberculosis, or in the language of his own day, consumption, need not necessarily have been his hereditary portion. Yet in the harsh and unhygienic conditions under which his life ran its course he might easily have inhaled it with the dust of the books, like Mozart or Schiller. And his life ended like theirs : he lived to be only forty-four.

His bust is in the garden of the Spinoza House and in several other places in Holland. But his real life, which is not threatened by death, was lived in the world of ideas and in intellectual exchange with men. Even in his lifetime, the real aura of this figure began to take form through his correspondence and his circle of friends—relations with men like Huygens and Leibniz, Heinrich Oldenburg, the secretary of the Royal Society of Sciences, and Jan de Witt. The great Condé tried to induce him to dedicate a book to Louis XIV., which would have brought him a considerable yearly salary. Spinoza, however, politely declined, just as he declined the flattering call to Heidelberg which the Count Palatine Karl Ludwig sent him. Conversation with friends, the page of a letter, a small book—these were the only realities upon which his mind would still depend. Thinking, reading, writing, and the improvement of what had been written, filled his days. For reading he had four languages at his disposal : Spanish, Dutch, Hebrew and Latin ; for his philosophy only the last-named. During his lifetime he permitted only trusted friends to glance at the manuscripts of his major works, especially his *Ethics* ; he had only one of his works published and circulated under his name, and another without it, and he had enough annoyance from it. That was the *Theological-Political Treatise*, in which he set down his political creed and a grandiose vision of state and freedom, for he, like his friend De Witt, was an enlightened republican and democrat—an opponent of all orthodoxy and all absolutism. Without

overestimating the masses as they were, he fought from inward conviction to secure for them the greatest possible measure of development with the least possible guardianship. For this he had to suffer vile abuse as long as a hundred years after his death.

Only we of to-day can once more estimate the meaning of the word *Spinozist* during those hundred years ; all we need do is replace it with *Bolshevik*. He was accused of the utmost in impious boldness, a delight in dragging down and destroying all that was holy, with atheism and hypocrisy. The reproach of being a Spinozist spelled *finis* even for him who had only to defend himself against it. In our day again, men like Freud and Einstein have the pain and the honour to draw upon themselves the utmost in fury, distortion, persecution and deprivation for pointing the way forward with their thinking. The most malicious pieces of boorishness were achievements of the parsons, especially the Germans. Their words cannot be quoted here because their vocabulary equalled that of the present-day Nazis in vulgarity—and like the Nazis they used it against all other adversaries. Like our age, because of the World War, theirs had been profoundly demoralized by the Thirty Years' War. But the Dutch parsons also never ceased their harassing attacks, and Spinoza's sensitive and solitary spirit needed all its philosophic equanimity and strength to raise itself above them. But this he never lacked. He was the most modest and also the most imperturbable among those of his stature. Beyond that the *Theological-Political Treatise* could be called a great success : it was included in the Index of the Roman Catholic Church ; in 1671 the Calvinist National Church of Holland, and in 1674 the States-General forbade it—and not only for these reasons was it greedily read. Several editions followed one another under false titles, disguised now as medical treatises, now as historical

works ; pamphlets appeared against it, and even during the last year of his life, Spinoza interrupted the writing of his new *Political Thesis* to provide a new edition of the *Theological-Political* one with explanatory interpolations. But death took the pen from his hand. Hardly had he noticed that his illness had taken a turn for the worse, when he succumbed. He expired on Sunday, 21st February 1677, in the presence of his friend and physician Lodewijk Meyer, and on 25th February he was buried in the new church on the Spuy, although he had never embraced Christianity. But in contrast to the obsequies of Schiller and Mozart who were buried without witnesses, his burial was attended, despite bad weather, by many distinguished men of the capital, and six carriages followed his coffin. For, although misunderstanding and obscurity among the common people are part of the fate of genius, the small circle of those who during his lifetime have felt a breath of his greatness and who bear witness to it, are just as surely another part. The very year of his death a volume of his literary remains, containing among others his *Ethics*, was brought out by his Amsterdam publisher and was forbidden the following year. The reactionary forces strove in vain to destroy the dead man. An afterglow set in a hundred years later, after the time had come and Europe had caught up with the head start this anticipating genius had possessed. And after another hundred years a statue was erected in his honour in The Hague—and one cannot properly demand more for a real genius.

### III

## THE SPIRITUAL PHYSIOGNOMY

### I. THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTIC :

#### *Amor Dei*

WE SHOWED IN THE BEGINNING HOW SPINOZA HAD to withdraw from his father's world and from Judaism as a consequence of his turning away from Miguel de Spinoza, whom he did not forgive for the death of his mother. Now, however, in his thinking, the reconciliation with his father celebrated an immense triumph which at the same time represented atonement for the fatality that, in the child's eyes, tore the parents apart. To no other philosopher in all intellectual history was the existence of God and His universal rule so magnificently given, so much a matter of course, as to Spinoza. Fundamentally characteristic of him, at the same time, was the unity, or better, the unification and fusing of the pro-creating principle, God, with the fecundated and active principle, Nature. *Deus sive natura*, God, that is, Nature, was Spinoza's basic formula ; thus the alliance and marriage which had so disastrously overshadowed the star of his childhood, were magically and mystically elevated to a world principle. This interpretation of his basic conception does not lessen the philosophic force of his grasp of the world, nor its validity for philosophic thinking. Anyone grown up like him amidst religious uproar might just as well have become the atheist for which he was reviled

for one century and misunderstood for another. But the bliss of being secure in the existence of God was as decisive for Spinoza as it is for any Jewish or Christian mystic. And at the same time, devotion and receptivity to the real nature of God and the world were as important to him as to his predecessors and teachers, Bacon and Hobbes. No trace of superstition tarnished his conception of God; and if modern astrophysics and the ionic theory have refined to the point of dematerialization the material conductor of all the oscillations and forces that make up our universe, they merely coincide with the signs Spinoza read in his "Natura," that the difference between God and the world is merely in the way they are looked at, the one conceived as *natura naturans*, active Nature, and the other as *natura naturata*, passive Nature.

That this grandiose pantheism had an especial influence on poets and poetical natures and Faustian characters needs no explanation. Here the outpouring and creative nature of thought was elevated to its purest lucidity. It was bound especially to dazzle and overpower the Germans in whom the striving after truth was always stronger than their ability to give it form and to grasp it. Therefore, from the end of the eighteenth century on, Lessing and Herder, Goethe and Novalis, Schleiermacher, Schelling and Hegel, were the re-discoverers and heralds of Spinoza's greatness, singularity and universal importance.

## 2. THE GEOMETRIC METHOD

It must be mentioned that in no wise did Spinoza make it easy for them or anyone else to absorb him and, as it were, to digest him. His method of presentation, the famous exposition "*more geometrico*," which he employed long before his *Ethics*, had a double purpose and a double effect: to assure, to the point of self-evidence, that which

was to be grasped, and to exclude with the hardness of glass any emotional impulses or other confusions which might creep into his thinking. We of to-day consider this very feature of Spinoza's intellectual physiognomy bound to its period, and transitory. We know with what passion his epoch flung itself upon play with mathematical forms, and also to what extent it widened the frontiers of this science, and what the name of Newton meant to that epoch. And although we cannot escape the æsthetic enjoyment contained in this geometrical play, and although, furthermore, we can appreciate fully the impulse, in troubled and fermenting times, to obtain impregnable intellectual results by this application of one single principle, mathematical-logical reasoning, we must spare the modern reader this geometric method, transmitting Spinoza's thoughts as they appear outside of it. This is possible because we are concerned to exhibit not Spinoza's philosophy in all its circuitousness, and wholly bound to its own times, but only that which can set the modern man in motion. Spinoza is a dogmatic spirit. His purpose is to overwhelm his reader. To him the important thing is, beginning with as few principles and definitions as possible, to set up a flawless structure of thought in which one thing goes back to another as in the sign of the Macrocosm of Dr. Faust: "How it all weaves into one whole, one working and living in the next! How heavenly forces upward go and down, passing the golden pails from hand to hand!" He must have spent years of absorption and inward-looking in finding the points of departure for these his basic principles, and further years of constant turning-about of his fields of intuition before he got at the secret of their structure. If we do not follow him in this field, these attributions, relations and proofs seem like scaffoldings, or like those auxiliary hypotheses through which the mathematicians finally arrive at valid results in



calculation. As an example of his definitions, let us take the following sentences: "BY THAT WHICH IS SELF-CAUSED, I mean that of which the essence involves existence, or that of which the nature is only conceivable as existent." (*Concerning God.*) Or, "By BODY I mean a mode which expresses in a certain determinate manner the essence of God, in so far as he is considered as an extended thing." (*Of the Nature and Origin of the Mind.*) If these sentences are simply flung off, to be understood in the everyday sense, they seem almost like empty sound, or like scholastic juggling with ideas. But if we remember how God and Nature are the same to Spinoza, so that everything being, nay the Universe, is included in it, then the first sentence means that this universe is the cause of itself, and that it can be imagined only as existing, *i.e.*, not as evoked, created out of a condition in which it was not. And the second sentence then shows that the nature of God is reflected in every existing object, in so far as the object shares, by its fundamental characteristic of extent, in the extensiveness of the cosmos.

These two examples are taken from the beginning of the first and second book of Spinoza's *Ethics*, of which the first treats "Of God," the second "Of the Nature and Origin of the Mind." But since both these books of the *Ethics* would have to be paraphrased and explained in this fashion sentence by sentence, we shall leave them aside in the present edition.

By this geometric method, this crafty, painful and profound positing of principles and definitions, the whole apparatus of attributes and *modi*, or forms of being, Spinoza fights his way from the methods of mediæval to those of modern, scientific thinking. And if to us his theses seem now patently true statements, but then again mere emergency structures and shadow-boxing, it is nevertheless our duty not to lose sight of his whole enormous exertion, his

struggle to put by the side of the unified and complete world in which we live an equally unified structure of comprehension, to portray or reflect existence intellectually, and thus to make it digestible, transparent to the human intellect, just as it is the task of a work of art to make the life and existence of human society transparent to the emotions.

### 3. THE PHILOSOPHER AS AN ORGAN OF SOCIETY

When, like Spinoza or Kant, the philosopher withdraws from the world of objects all his powers of loving, acting and fighting, to turn them altogether into spiritual seeing and intellectual grasping, his immense sacrifice is not in vain in the economy of human existence. He redirects these forces ; with his understanding he begets the world anew, struggling with its totality until a new totality, the inner, intellectual one of his own cosmos, results. He is rewarded for his self-denial by that exalted purity which distinguishes his abstractions, that asceticism which Spinoza calls "*Amor intellectualis Dei*," the intellectual love of God. In it he rests safely, like the child in the crystal in the penetrating drawing by the master Hans Thoma. He sits within this crystal of the world ; its facets and edges are to him familiar and appropriate. He sees them from within ; he understands them. This is the secret of intuition, of the truth that reveals itself to the seeing mind, needing no bridges and crutches of exposition. A mystic union with the fundament of knowledge is effected by this act of seeing. It is this intuitive truth that Spinoza calls "The special sign of itself and of the false." Such a statement as *two times two equals four*, or *orange is between red and yellow*, belongs, in a banal and ordinary fashion, in this category. No doubt we are convinced that hundreds of centuries' fumbling, guessing and striving during the ages of our

prehistory when Man had not yet arrived even at guessing or association of ideas, were necessary to prepare for such ignition of ideas. But for the man of to-day they need no more proofs ; to him they are matters of course, patent, indisputable. And on such axioms and intuitions Spinoza founds his structure of thought. Apart from these Man possesses two further kinds of knowledge : one, of little value, the untested communication of ordinary life ; one, more valuable, adequate to its objects—reasonable judgment. Though the compulsion toward systems may seem to us to-day a sign of finished epochs, the fact that such systems exist is one of mankind's greatest possessions. During those epochs the sum of perceptions accessible to man was thought to have been reached.

To-day we know that precisely with Spinoza's time there began a new era in the investigation of Nature, in observation of the Universe, in knowledge of humankind, which has since expressed itself in that multiplicity of new disciplines, that wealth of sciences whose stupendous body of material has divided, split, riven asunder and confused human knowledge. This, of course, is not to say anything against these disciplines, which pour forth a veritable intoxication of knowledge, insight and technological improvement of life. But the task they set us is precisely the ceaseless admonition to unify and simplify which arises with the great philosophers, their systems and architectonic structures. That Man must have some support in the face of the wealth of existence, and that he must give it to himself by force of his own thought—no extramundane God, no transcendental force, no occult system, neither astrology nor Spiritism—this is the function performed by the constructive philosopher within society. Mightily he reminds Man of the power of intellect. Such a teacher as Spinoza cries out to every epoch : Use your intellect, sharpen it, trust it, learn to use it and be guided

by it alone. It is the dictator that will advance the world ; it is the creative process with whose help you can oppose to the chaos that troubles you the powers of enlightenment, contentment and formation. It will give you its insight into the orderliness of the cosmos, into the inviolable, self-dependent, self-sufficient necessity of all being and happening. It overcomes even Death, in that a well-thought-out thesis may probably outlive world empires, and stamp the most transitory of epochs with eternal significance.

In the end the system of Spinoza may be paraphrased as follows—one of the most sparkling filigree webs in which our urge for insight has ever tried to encompass the world. God—or Nature—is the original cause of all being and of itself. Among its infinitely numerous qualities (or attributes) are thought and extent, so that nothing intellectual is possible without extent, nothing extensive without intellectuality. Since the nature of God is unchangeable and perfect, and perfection means not only ethical but mathematical perfection, *i.e.*, completeness, every possible thing exists in God or Nature—even the evil, the bad, the harmful. And since it is present from the beginning, there can be nothing surprising, but only things determined from the outset. This means the denial of any freedom of will, any chance (in so far as they produce changes in the external world) of any teleology, which ascribes everything created to a reasonable purpose ; and it sets up a determinism that has been outworn by modern natural science, but that was demanded just then by mechanistic physics.

By these means Spinoza penetrates the organism of the Universe and its flawless natural orderliness. To him God or Nature in its absolute infinity is the effective cause of all being, which in turn gives birth only to different forms of this same divine substance. These forms arise from the substance like waves from the sea, “ which end-

lessly creates new images, and allows them to pass away, without thus changing the, as it were, infinite extent of the sea." These are the *modi* of substance and its attributes, among which is Man himself. They produce the eternal play of coming into being and passing away, without affecting the unchangeableness of the original cause, the Eternal. Thus active Nature (*natura naturans*) and passive Nature (*natura naturata*) join to form the pantheism that, through Spinoza, opened a new epoch in the animation of the Universe, without impugning the validity of natural laws.

#### 4. THE ETHICS OF THE METAPHYSICIAN

That which comes next in Spinoza's intellectual structure the reader will find concentrated in the pages of the present book. It is the world of his real subject which is called *Ethica*, and thus must deal with moral facts, with values and their special laws, with ethical life and action. In actuality the ethical thinker begins with a peculiar impediment. Like any natural scientist, he does not acknowledge good and evil as such; no more does he the whole realm of æsthetic and moral values.

We soon discover that it is a long road from such a transfer of moral values into the realm of mere human concepts, to the reasoned justification of ethical action. But the man with whom we are dealing was never for the easy way, and he never made things easy for himself, either in life or in thought. How important to him, on the other hand, this part of his philosophical thinking and his explaining was, anyone with ears can hear plainly from the new tone with which he now sets forth his perceptions. Underneath his cool delivery is a rushing stream of restrained passion, the passion of a great stylist. Suddenly it is not mathematics and logic that sets the tone,

but the urgent and convinced wish of a teacher and guide toward right life. And this road he himself now pursues by the following method. First he observes the nature of Man, the fundamental facts of the world of impulse as a natural scientist finds them. Then he draws the conclusions, visible to everyone, that result for the ordinary life of the uninstructed ; and above these he raises the guiding thoughts that lead, according to his conviction, out of subjugation to desires and their satisfaction, toward the superiority of the true, emancipated mind. But this is the true Spinozism, teaching freedom and the happiness of renunciation, that stable happiness which he never grows tired of praising, as he never tires of being a living example of it. He sees Man, that *modus*, that morphological phenomenon, as a leaf on the mighty tree of the Universe, moved by the same original impulse as this, namely, to persist in being. If that impulse is obstructed, suffering and grief are the result ; if the obstruction is thrown aside, overcome by the original impulse, the man is filled with joy. The oscillation between these two poles produces emotions, passions, instincts, but also the strength to cope with them. Thus there arises between love and hatred a field of tension in which everything preservative and useful is desired, while that which threatens our existence keeps tending to be shoved aside. Hence, to him, that man is particularly virtuous who tries and is able to preserve his being, while he who neglects this advantage is damned to impotence. For in the Universe or in God the tendency toward endless being is completely powerful, and non-being is vanquished. Therefore to act absolutely through virtue means to act under the guidance of reason, and thus to preserve one's life and one's being. " But everything for which one strives through reason is simply knowledge ; and so far as it makes use of its reason the soul considers useful only what leads to knowledge. Thus the soul's highest good is the

knowledge of God, and its highest virtue to perceive God, which means to agree with our own nature."

The reader can see for himself how Spinoza develops from this the whole spectrum of human impulses, and how he shows to the creature pulled hither and thither the way to contentment, to that floating equilibrium of sight *sub specie æternitatis*, in the light of eternity, which is all that Man can attain. He who truly sees God, that is the exalted necessity of every happening in the Universe, cannot but love Him, just as God must love Himself, because He is constantly aware of His own being. In the white heat of this light the deceptions of our passions evaporate; fighting our way through to it, being brave in the intellectual sense, leads to that high felicity, the *amor Dei*, in which the highest virtue is spontaneously generated. And in it too the *modus* Man releases himself for freedom, the only immortality that is vouchsafed him. "If the way which I have pointed out as leading to this result seems exceedingly hard," the *Ethics* concludes, with hidden pathos, "it may nevertheless be discovered. Needs must it be hard, since it is so seldom found. How would it be possible, if salvation were ready to our hand, and could without great labour be found, that it should be by almost all men neglected? But all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare." For to Spinoza that man is free who has surrendered himself to reason through absorption and stout-hearted thinking and deduction; who is capable of opposing to darkening passions the calm countenance of his soul, of seeing through the wandering and confusing character of the affections, and of joining actively in affirming and denying, in the acts and omissions of the fighters for the truth.

This is the fruit of the wisdom of Baruch Spinoza as it appears in his books and by the pure life of him who thought it. When we read that the free will of man is to be traced

back to the ignorance of causes which determine it, and that real freedom arises rather in the measure in which man frees himself of his passions, to unite himself with God by spiritual submersion and contemplation, we see as if through a rising mist the faint smile and melancholy eyes of that lonely man who went out from the Portuguese emigration of Amsterdam Jewry to radiate eternal light in the Pantheon of human wisdom and superiority.



Arnold Zweig has selected  
the essence of Spinoza's thought from

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNDER-  
STANDING  
ETHICS

*THE WORKS OF*  
**BARUCH DE SPINOZA**

(1632-1677)

Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding (1662)

Short Treatise on God, Man and his Well-Being (1662)

Principles of the Cartesian Philosophy together with  
Metaphysical Thoughts (1663)

Ethics (1662-1675)

Theological-Political Treatise (1670)

Compendium of Hebrew Grammar (1670-1677)

Tract on the Rainbow (published 1687)

The Calculation of Chances (published 1883)

## ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNDERSTANDING

**A**FTER EXPERIENCE HAD TAUGHT ME THAT ALL THE usual surroundings of social life are vain and futile ; seeing that none of the objects of my fears contained in themselves anything either good or bad, except in so far as the mind is affected by them, I finally resolved to inquire whether there might be some real good having power to communicate itself, which would affect the mind singly, to the exclusion of all else ; whether, in fact, there might be anything of which the discovery and attainment would enable me to enjoy continuous, supreme and unending happiness. I say "I FINALLY resolved," for at first sight it seemed unwise willingly to lose hold on what was sure for the sake of something then uncertain. I could see the benefits which are acquired through fame and riches, and that I should be obliged to abandon the quest of such objects, if I seriously devoted myself to the search for something different and new. I perceived that if true happiness chanced to be placed in the former I should necessarily miss it ; while if, on the other hand, it were not so placed, and I gave them my whole attention, I should equally fail.

I therefore debated whether it would not be possible to arrive at the new principle, or at any rate at a certainty concerning its existence, without changing the conduct and usual plan of my life ; with this end in view I made many efforts, but in vain. For the ordinary surroundings of life which are esteemed by men (as their actions testify) to be the highest good, may be classed under the three

heads—Riches, Fame and the Pleasures of Sense : with these three the mind is so absorbed that it has little power to reflect on any different good. By sensual pleasure the mind is enthralled to the extent of quiescence, as if the supreme good were actually attained, so that it is quite incapable of thinking of any other object ; when such pleasure has been gratified it is followed by extreme melancholy, whereby the mind, though not enthralled, is disturbed and dulled.

The pursuit of honours and riches is likewise very absorbing, especially if such objects be sought simply for their own sake, inasmuch as they are then supposed to constitute the highest good. In the case of fame the mind is still more absorbed, for fame is conceived as always good for its own sake, and as the ultimate end to which all actions are directed. Further, the attainment of riches and fame is not followed as in the case of sensual pleasures by repentance, but, the more we acquire, the greater is our delight, and, consequently, the more we are incited to increase both the one and the other ; on the other hand, if our hopes happen to be frustrated we are plunged into the deepest sadness. Fame has the further drawback that it compels its votaries to order their lives according to the opinions of their fellow-men, shunning what they usually shun, and seeking what they usually seek.

When I saw that all these ordinary objects of desire would be obstacles in the way of a search for something different and new—nay, that they were so opposed thereto, that either they or it would have to be abandoned, I was forced to inquire which would prove the most useful to me : for, as I say, I seemed to be willingly losing hold on a sure good for the sake of something uncertain. However, after I had reflected on the matter, I came in the first place to the conclusion that by abandoning the ordinary objects of pursuit, and betaking myself to a new quest, I

should be leaving a good, uncertain by reason of its own nature, as may be gathered from what has been said, for the sake of a good not uncertain in its nature (for I sought for a fixed good), but only in the possibility of its attainment.

Further reflection convinced me, that if I could really get to the root of the matter, I should be leaving certain evils for a certain good. I thus perceived that I was in a state of great peril, and I compelled myself to seek with all my strength for a remedy, however uncertain it might be ; as a sick man struggling with a deadly disease, when he sees that death will surely be upon him unless a remedy be found, is compelled to seek such a remedy with all his strength, inasmuch as his whole hope lies therein. All the objects pursued by the multitude, not only bring no remedy that tends to preserve our being, but even act as hindrances, causing the death not seldom of those who possess them, and always of those who are possessed by them. There are many examples of men who have suffered persecution even to death for the sake of their riches, and of men who in pursuit of wealth have exposed themselves to so many dangers, that they have paid away their life as a penalty for their folly. Examples are no less numerous of men, who have endured the utmost wretchedness for the sake of gaining or preserving their reputation. Lastly, there are innumerable cases of men, who have hastened their death through over-indulgence in sensual pleasure. All these evils seem to have arisen from the fact, that happiness or unhappiness is made wholly to depend on the quality of the object which we love. When a thing is not loved, no quarrels will arise concerning it—no sadness will be felt if it perishes—no envy if it is possessed by another—no fear, no hatred, in short no disturbances of the mind. All these arise from the love of what is perishable, such as the objects already mentioned. But love toward a thing

eternal and infinite feeds the mind wholly with joy, and is itself unmingled with any sadness, wherefore it is greatly to be desired and sought for with all our strength. Yet it was not at random that I used the words, "If I could go to the root of the matter," for, though what I have urged was perfectly clear to my mind, I could not forthwith lay aside all love of riches, sensual enjoyment and fame. One thing was evident, namely, that while my mind was employed with these thoughts it turned away from its former objects of desire, and seriously considered the search for a new principle ; this state of things was a great comfort to me, for I perceived that the evils were not such as to resist all remedies. Although these intervals were at first rare, and of very short duration, yet afterward, as the true good became more and more discernible to me, they became more frequent and more lasting ; especially after I had recognized that the acquisition of wealth, sensual pleasure or fame, is only a hindrance, so long as they are sought as ends, not as means ; if they be sought as means they will be under restraint, and, far from being hindrances, will further not a little the end for which they are sought, as I will show in due time.

I will here only briefly state what I mean by true good, and also what is the nature of the highest good. In order that this may be rightly understood, we must bear in mind that the terms good and evil are only applied relatively, so that the same thing may be called both good and bad, according to the relations in view, in the same way as it may be called perfect or imperfect. Nothing regarded in its own nature can be called perfect or imperfect ; especially when we are aware that all things which come to pass, come to pass according to the eternal order and fixed laws of nature. However, human weakness cannot attain to this order in its own thoughts, but meanwhile man conceives a human character much more stable than his own,

and sees that there is no reason why he should not himself acquire such a character. Thus he is led to seek for means which will bring him to this pitch of perfection, and calls everything which will serve as such means a true good. The chief good is that he should arrive, together with other individuals if possible, at the possession of the aforesaid character. What that character is we shall show in due time, namely, that it is the knowledge of the union existing between the mind and the whole of nature. This, then, is the end for which I strive, to attain to such a character myself, and to endeavour that many should attain to it with me. In other words, it is part of my happiness to lend a helping hand, that many others may understand even as I do, so that their understanding and desire may entirely agree with my own. In order to bring this about, it is necessary to understand as much of nature as will enable us to attain to the aforesaid character, and also to form a social order such as is most conducive to the attainment of this character by the greatest number with the least difficulty and danger. We must seek the assistance of Moral Philosophy and the Theory of Education; further, as health is no insignificant means for attaining our end, we must also include the whole science of Medicine, and, as many difficult things are by contrivance rendered easy, and we can in this way gain much time and convenience, the science of Mechanics must in no way be despised. But, before all things, a means must be devised for improving the understanding and purifying it, as far as may be at the outset, so that it may apprehend things without error, and in the best possible way.

Thus it is apparent to everyone that I wish to direct all sciences to one end and aim, so that we may attain to the supreme human perfection which we have named; and, therefore, whatsoever in the sciences does not serve to promote our object will have to be rejected as useless.

To sum up the matter in a word, all our actions and thoughts must be directed to this one end. Yet, as it is necessary that while we are endeavouring to attain our purpose, and bring the understanding into the right path, we should carry on our life, we are compelled first of all to lay down certain rules of life as provisionally good, to wit, the following :

I. To speak in a manner intelligible to the multitude, and to comply with every general custom that does not hinder the attainment of our purpose. For we can gain from the multitude no small advantages, provided that we strive to accommodate ourselves to its understanding as far as possible : moreover, we shall in this way gain a friendly audience for the reception of the truth.

II. To indulge ourselves with pleasures only in so far as they are necessary for preserving health.

III. Lastly, to endeavour to obtain only sufficient money or other commodities to enable us to preserve our life and health, and to follow such general customs as are consistent with our purpose.



## GOD, NATURE, NECESSITY

**G**OD, OR SUBSTANCE, CONSISTING OF INFINITE ATTRIBUTES, OF WHICH EACH EXPRESSES ETERNAL AND INFINITE ESSENTIALITY, NECESSARILY EXISTS.

THE ETERNAL AND INFINITE BEING, WHICH WE CALL GOD OR NATURE, ACTS BY THE SAME NECESSITY AS THAT WHEREBY IT EXISTS.

WHATSOEVER IS, IS IN GOD, AND WITHOUT GOD NOTHING CAN BE, OR BE CONCEIVED.

THE CORPOREAL OR EXTENDED SUBSTANCE WAS NOT CREATED BY GOD BUT IS ONE OF THE INFINITE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

ALL THINGS WHICH COME TO PASS, COME TO PASS SOLELY THROUGH THE LAWS OF THE INFINITE NATURE OF GOD, AND FOLLOW FROM THE NECESSITY OF HIS ESSENCE.

NOTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS CONTINGENT, BUT ALL THINGS ARE CONDITIONED TO EXIST AND OPERATE IN A PARTICULAR MANNER BY THE NECESSITY OF THE DIVINE NATURE.

THINGS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO BEING BY GOD IN ANY MANNER OR IN ANY ORDER DIFFERENT FROM THAT WHICH HAS IN FACT OBTAINED. THEREFROM IT FOLLOWS THAT THINGS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO BEING BY GOD IN THE HIGHEST PERFECTION, INASMUCH AS THEY HAVE NECESSARILY FOLLOWED FROM A MOST PERFECT NATURE.

REALITY and PERFECTION I use as synonymous terms.

The nature and properties of God are : that he necessarily exists, that he is one ; that he is, and acts solely by the necessity of his own nature ; that he is the free cause of all things ; that all things are in God, and so depend on him, that without him they could neither exist nor be conceived ; lastly, that all things are pre-determined by God, not through his free will or absolute fiat, but from the very nature of God or infinite power. Yet there remain misconceptions not a few, which might and may prove very grave hindrances to the understanding of the concatenation of things. I therefore think it worth while to bring these misconceptions before the bar of reason.

All such opinions spring from the notion commonly entertained, that all things in nature act as men themselves act, namely, with an end in view. It is accepted as certain, that God himself directs all things to a definite goal (for it is said that God made all things for man, and man that he might worship him). I will, therefore, consider this opinion, asking first, why it obtains general credence, and why all men are naturally so prone to adopt it ? secondly, I will point out its falsity ; and, lastly, I will show how it has given rise to prejudices about good and bad, right and wrong, praise and blame, order and confusion, beauty and ugliness, and the like.

However, this is not the place to deduce these misconceptions from the nature of the human mind : it will be sufficient here, if I assume as a starting-point, what ought to be universally admitted, namely, that all men are born ignorant of the causes of things, that all have the desire to seek for what is useful to them, and that they are conscious of such desire. Herefrom it follows first, that men think themselves free, inasmuch as they are conscious of their volitions and desires, and never even dream, in their ignorance, of the causes which have disposed them to wish and desire. Secondly, that men do all things for an end, namely,

for that which is useful to them, and which they seek. Thus it comes to pass that they only look for a knowledge of the final causes of events, and when these are learned, they are content, as having no cause for further doubt. If they cannot learn such causes from external sources, they are compelled to turn to considering themselves, and reflecting what end would have induced them personally to bring about the given event, and thus they necessarily judge other natures by their own.

Further, as they find in themselves and outside themselves many means which assist them not a little in their search for what is useful, for instance, eyes for seeing, teeth for chewing, herbs and animals for yielding food, the sun for giving light, the sea for breeding fish, etc., they come to look on the whole of nature as a means for obtaining such conveniences. Now as they are aware that they found these conveniences and did not make them, they think they have cause for believing that some other being has made them for their use. As they look upon things as means, they cannot believe them to be self-created; but, judging from the means which they are accustomed to prepare for themselves, they are bound to believe in some ruler or rulers of the Universe endowed with human freedom who have arranged and adapted everything for human use. They are bound to estimate the nature of such rulers (having no information on the subject) in accordance with their own nature, and therefore they assert that the gods ordained everything for the use of man, in order to bind man to themselves and obtain from him the highest honours.

Hence also it follows, that everyone thought out for himself, according to his abilities, a different way of worshipping God, so that God might love him more than his fellows, and direct the whole course of nature for the satisfaction of his blind cupidity and insatiable avarice. Thus the prejudice developed into superstition, and took deep

root in the human mind ; and for this reason everyone strove most zealously to understand and explain the final causes of things.

But in their endeavour to show that nature does nothing in vain, *i.e.*, nothing which is useless to man, they only seem to have demonstrated that nature, the gods and men are all mæd together. Consider, I pray you, the result : among the many helps of nature they were bound to find some hindrances, such as storms, earthquakes, diseases, etc. : so they declared that such things happen, because the gods are angry at some wrong done them by men, or at some fault committed in their worship. Experience day by day protested and showed by infinite examples, that good and evil fortunes fall to the lot of pious and impious alike ; still they would not abandon their inveterate prejudice, for it was more easy for them to class such contradictions among other unknown things of whose use they were ignorant, and thus to retain their actual and innate condition of ignorance, than to destroy the whole fabric of their reasoning and start afresh. They therefore laid down as an axiom, that God's judgments far transcend human understanding. Such a doctrine might well have sufficed to conceal the truth from the human race for all eternity, if mathematics had not furnished another standard of verity in considering solely the essence and properties of figures without regard to their final causes. There are other reasons (which I need not mention here) besides mathematics which might have caused men's minds to be directed to these general prejudices, and have led them to the knowledge of the truth.

I have now sufficiently explained my first point. There is no need to show at length, that nature has no particular goal in view, and that final causes are mere human figments. This, I think, is already evident enough, both from the causes and foundations on which I have shown such pre-

judice to be based, and, in fact, from all propositions in which I have shown, that everything in nature proceeds from a sort of necessity, and with the utmost perfection.

The followers of this doctrine, anxious to display their talent in assigning final causes, have imported a new method of argument in proof of their theory—namely, a reduction, not to the impossible but to ignorance. For example, if a stone falls from a roof on to someone's head and kills him, they will demonstrate by their new method, that the stone fell in order to kill the man; for, if it had not by God's will fallen with that object, how could so many circumstances (and there are often many concurrent circumstances) have all happened together by chance? Perhaps you will answer that the event is due to the facts that the wind was blowing, and the man was walking that way. "But why," they will insist, "was the wind blowing, and why was the man at that very time walking that way?" If you again answer, that the wind had then sprung up because the sea had begun to be agitated the day before, the weather being previously calm, and that the man had been invited by a friend, they will again insist: "But why was the sea agitated, and why was the man invited at that time?" So they will pursue their questions from cause to cause, till at last you take refuge in the will of God—in other words, the sanctuary of ignorance. So, again, when they survey the frame of the human body, they are amazed; and being ignorant of the causes of so great a work of art conclude that it has been fashioned, not mechanically, but by divine and supernatural skill, and has been so put together that one part shall not hurt another.

Hence anyone who seeks for the true causes of miracles, and strives to understand natural phenomena as an intelligent being, and not to gaze at them like a fool, is set down and denounced as an impious heretic by those whom the masses adore as the interpreters of nature and the gods. Such

persons know that, with the removal of ignorance, the wonder which forms their only available means for proving and preserving their authority would vanish also. But I now quit this subject, and pass on to my third point.

After men persuaded themselves that everything which is created is created for their sake, they were bound to consider as the chief quality in everything that which is most useful to themselves, and to account those things the best of all which have the most beneficial effect on mankind. Further, they were bound to form abstract notions for the explanation of the nature of things, such as GOODNESS, BADNESS, ORDER, CONFUSION, WARMTH, COLD, BEAUTY, DEFORMITY and so on ; and from the belief that they are free agents arose the further notions PRAISE and BLAME, SIN and MERIT.

I will speak of these latter hereafter, when I treat of human nature ; the former I will briefly explain here.

Everything which conduces to health and the worship of God they have called GOOD, everything which hinders these objects they have styled BAD ; and inasmuch as those who do not understand the nature of things do not verify phenomena in any way, but merely imagine them after a fashion, and mistake their imagination for understanding, such persons firmly believe that there is an ORDER in things, being really ignorant both of things and their own nature. When phenomena are of such a kind, that the impression they make on our senses requires little effort of imagination, and can consequently be easily remembered, we say that they are WELL-ORDERED ; if the contrary, that they are ILL-ORDERED or CONFUSED. Further, as things which are easily imagined are more pleasing to us, men prefer order to confusion—as though there were any order in nature, except in relation to our imagination—and say that God has created all things in order ; thus, without knowing it, attributing imagination to God, unless, indeed, they would

have it that God foresaw human imagination, and arranged everything, so that it should be most easily imagined. If this be their theory they would not, perhaps, be daunted by the fact that we find an infinite number of phenomena, far surpassing our imagination, and very many others which confound its weakness. But enough has been said on this subject. The other abstract notions are nothing but modes of imagining, in which the imagination is differently affected, though they are considered by the ignorant as the chief attributes of things, inasmuch as they believe that everything was created for the sake of themselves ; and, according as they are affected by it, style it good or bad, healthy or rotten and corrupt. For instance, if the motion whose objects we see communicate to our nerves be conducive to health, the objects causing it are styled BEAUTIFUL ; if a contrary motion be excited, they are styled UGLY.

Things which are perceived through our sense of smell are styled fragrant or fetid ; if through our taste, sweet or bitter, full-flavoured or insipid ; if through our touch, hard or soft, rough or smooth, etc.

Whatsoever affects our ears is said to give rise to noise, sound or harmony. In this last case, there are men lunatic enough to believe that even God himself takes pleasure in harmony ; and philosophers are not lacking who have persuaded themselves, that the motion of the heavenly bodies gives rise to harmony—all of which instances sufficiently show that everyone judges of things according to the state of his brain, or rather mistakes for things the forms of his imagination.

We need no longer wonder that there have arisen all the controversies we have witnessed and finally scepticism : for, although human bodies in many respects agree, yet in very many others they differ ; so that what seems good to one seems bad to another ; what seems well ordered

to one seems confused to another ; what is pleasing to one displeases another, and so on. It is commonly said : " So many men, so many minds ; everyone is wise in his own way ; brains differ as completely as palates." All of which proverbs show, that men judge of things according to their mental disposition.

We have now perceived that all the explanations commonly given of nature are mere modes of imagining, and do not indicate the true nature of anything, but only the constitution of the imagination ; and, although they have names, as though they were entities, existing externally to the imagination, I call them entities imaginary rather than real ; and, therefore, all arguments against us drawn from such abstractions are easily rebutted.

Many argue in this way. If all things follow from a necessity of the absolutely perfect nature of God, why are there so many imperfections in nature ? such, for instance, as things corrupt to the point of putridity, loathsome deformity, confusion, evil, sin, etc. But these reasoners are, as I have said, easily confuted, for the perfection of things is to be reckoned only from their own nature and power ; things are not more or less perfect, according as they delight or offend human senses, or according as they are serviceable or repugnant to mankind. To those who ask why God did not so create all men, that they should be governed only by reason, I give no answer but this : because matter was not lacking to him for the creation of every degree of perfection from highest to lowest ; or, more strictly, because the laws of his nature are so vast, as to suffice for the production of everything conceivable by an infinite intelligence.



## MIND AND THOUGHT

**T**HOUGHT IS ONE OF THE INFINITE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, WHICH EXPRESS GOD'S ETERNAL AND INFINITE ESSENCE.

EXTENDED SUBSTANCE IS ONE OF THE INFINITE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

SUBSTANCE THINKING AND SUBSTANCE EXTENDED ARE ONE AND THE SAME SUBSTANCE, COMPREHENDED NOW THROUGH ONE ATTRIBUTE, NOW THROUGH THE OTHER.

THE ORDER AND CONNECTION OF IDEAS IS THE SAME AS THE ORDER AND CONNECTION OF THINGS.

THE HUMAN MIND IS PART OF THE INFINITE INTELLECT OF GOD ; WHEN WE SAY, THAT THE HUMAN MIND PERCEIVES THIS OR THAT, WE MAKE THE ASSERTION, THAT GOD HAS THIS OR THAT IDEA IN SO FAR AS HE IS DISPLAYED THROUGH THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN MIND, OR IN SO FAR AS HE CONSTITUTES THE ESSENCE OF THE HUMAN MIND.

THE FIRST ELEMENT WHICH CONSTITUTES THE ACTUAL BEING OF THE HUMAN MIND, IS THE IDEA OF SOME PARTICULAR THING ACTUALLY EXISTING.

THERE IS NOTHING POSITIVE IN IDEAS, WHICH CAUSES THEM TO BE CALLED FALSE. FALSITY CONSISTS IN THE PRIVATION OF KNOWLEDGE, WHICH INADEQUATE, FRAGMENTARY, OR CONFUSED IDEAS INVOLVE.

### *The Different Kinds of Knowledge*

We, in many cases, perceive and form our general notions : (1) From particular things represented to our intellect fragmentarily, confusedly and without order through our senses. I have settled to call such perceptions by the name of knowledge from the mere suggestions of experience. (2) From symbols, *e.g.*, from the fact of having read or heard certain words we remember things and form certain ideas concerning them, similar to those through which we imagine things. I shall call both these ways of regarding things KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIRST KIND, OPINION OR IMAGINATION. (3) From the fact that we have notions common to all men, and adequate ideas of the properties of things ; this I call REASON and KNOWLEDGE OF THE SECOND KIND. Besides these two kinds of knowledge, there is, as I will hereafter show, a third kind of knowledge, which we will call intuition. I will illustrate all three kinds of knowledge by a single example. Three numbers are given for finding a fourth, which shall be to the third as the second is to the first. Tradesmen without hesitation multiply the second by the third, and divide the product by the first ; either because they have not forgotten the rule which they received from a master without any proof, or because they have often made trial of it with simple numbers, or by virtue of the proof of the nineteenth proposition of the seventh book of Euclid, namely, in virtue of the general property of proportionals.

But with very simple numbers there is no need of this. For instance, one, two, three, being given, everyone can see that the fourth proportional is six ; and this is much clearer, because we infer the fourth number from an intuitive grasping of the ratio, which the first bears to the second.

IT IS NOT IN THE NATURE OF REASON TO REGARD THINGS AS CONTINGENT, BUT AS NECESSARY.

IT IS IN THE NATURE OF REASON TO PERCEIVE THINGS UNDER A CERTAIN FORM OF ETERNITY (*sub quâdam æternitatis specie*).

EVERY IDEA OF EVERYBODY, OR OF EVERY PARTICULAR THING ACTUALLY EXISTING, NECESSARILY INVOLVES THE ETERNAL AND INFINITE ESSENCE OF GOD.

IN PROPORTION AS ANY GIVEN BODY IS MORE FITTED THAN OTHERS FOR DOING MANY ACTIONS OR RECEIVING MANY IMPRESSIONS AT ONCE, SO ALSO IS THE MIND, OF WHICH IT IS THE OBJECT, MORE FITTED THAN OTHERS FOR FORMING MANY SIMULTANEOUS PERCEPTIONS ; AND THE MORE THE ACTIONS OF ONE BODY DEPEND ON ITSELF ALONE, AND THE FEWER OTHER BODIES CONCUR WITH IT IN ACTION, THE MORE FITTED IS THE MIND OF WHICH IT IS THE OBJECT FOR DISTINCT COMPREHENSION.

## ON THE EMOTIONS

**M**OST WRITERS ON THE EMOTIONS AND ON HUMAN conduct seem to be treating rather of matters outside nature than of natural phenomena following nature's general laws. They appear to conceive man to be situated in nature as a kingdom within a kingdom : for they believe that he disturbs rather than follows nature's order, that he has absolute control over his actions, and that he is determined solely by himself. They attribute human infirmities and fickleness, not to the power of nature in general, but to some mysterious flaw in the nature of man, which accordingly they bemoan, deride, despise or, as usually happens, abuse : he who succeeds in hitting off the weakness of the human mind more eloquently or more acutely than his fellows is looked upon as a seer. Still there has been no lack of very excellent men (to whose toil and industry I confess myself much indebted), who have written many noteworthy things concerning the right way of life, and have given much sage advice to mankind. But no one, so far as I know, has defined the nature and strength of the emotions, and the power of the mind against them for their restraint.

For the present I wish to revert to those who would rather abuse or deride human emotions than understand them. Such persons will doubtless think it strange that I should attempt to treat of human vice and folly geometrically, and should wish to set forth with rigid reasoning those matters which they cry out against as repugnant to reason, frivolous, absurd and dreadful. However, such is my plan. Nothing comes to pass in nature which

can be set down to a flaw therein ; for nature is always the same, and everywhere one and the same in her efficacy and power of action ; that is, nature's laws and ordinances, whereby all things come to pass and change from one form to another, are everywhere and always the same ; so that there should be one and the same method of understanding the nature of all things whatsoever, namely, through nature's universal laws and rules. Thus the passions of hatred, anger, envy and so on, considered in themselves, follow from this same necessity and efficacy of nature ; they answer to certain definite causes, through which they are understood, and possess certain properties as worthy of being known as the properties of anything else, whereof the contemplation in itself affords us delight. I shall, therefore, treat of the nature and strength of the emotions according to the same method as I employed heretofore in my investigations concerning God and the mind. I shall consider human actions and desires in exactly the same manner as though I were concerned with lines, planes and solids.

### *On Freedom of Will*

WILL CANNOT BE CALLED A FREE CAUSE, BUT ONLY A NECESSARY CAUSE.

IN THE MIND THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE OR FREE WILL ; BUT THE MIND IS DETERMINED TO WISH THIS OR THAT BY A CAUSE, WHICH HAS ALSO BEEN DETERMINED BY ANOTHER CAUSE, AND THIS LAST BY ANOTHER CAUSE, AND SO ON TO INFINITY.

Men are mistaken in thinking themselves free ; their opinion is made up of consciousness of their own actions, and ignorance of the causes by which they are conditioned. Their idea of freedom, therefore, is simply their ignorance of any cause for their actions. As for their saying that human actions depend on the will, this is a mere phrase

without any idea to correspond thereto. What the will is, and how it moves the body, they none of them know.

But, they will say that the mind alone can determine whether we speak or are silent, and a variety of similar states which, accordingly, we say depend on the mind's decree.

I submit that the world would be much happier, if men were as fully able to keep silence as they are to speak. Experience abundantly shows that men can govern anything more easily than their tongues, and restrain anything more easily than their appetites ; whence it comes about that many believe, that we are only free in respect to objects which we moderately desire, because our desire for such can easily be controlled by the thought of something else frequently remembered, but that we are by no means free in respect to what we seek with violent emotion, for our desire cannot then be allayed with the remembrance of anything else. However, unless such persons had proved by experience that we do many things which we afterward repent of, and again that we often, when assailed by contrary emotions, see the better and follow the worse, there would be nothing to prevent their believing that we are free in all things. Thus an infant believes that of its own free will it desires milk, an angry child believes that it freely desires vengeance, a timid child believes that it freely desires to run away ; further, a drunken man believes that he utters from the free decision of his mind words which, when he is sober, he would willingly have withheld : thus, too, a delirious man, a garrulous woman, a child, and others of like complexion, believe that they speak from the free decision of their mind, when they are in reality unable to restrain their impulse to talk.

Experience teaches us no less clearly than reason, that men believe themselves to be free, simply because they are conscious of their actions, and unconscious of the causes

whereby those actions are determined ; and, further, it is plain that the dictates of the mind are but another name for the appetites, and therefore vary according to the varying state of the body. Everyone shapes his actions according to his emotion, those who are assailed by conflicting emotions know not what they wish ; those who are not attacked by any emotion are readily swayed this way or that. For the present I wish to call attention to another point, namely, that we cannot act by the decision of the mind, unless we have a remembrance of having done so. For instance, we cannot say a word without remembering that we have done so. Again, it is not within the free power of the mind to remember or forget a thing at will. Therefore the freedom of the mind must in any case be limited to the power of uttering or not uttering something which it remembers. But when we dream that we speak, we believe that we speak from a free decision of the mind, yet we do not speak, or, if we do, it is by a spontaneous motion of the body. Again, we dream that we are concealing something, and we seem to act from the same decision of the mind as that, whereby we keep silence when awake concerning something we know. Lastly, we dream that from the free decision of our mind we do something which we should not dare to do when awake. Now I should like to know whether there be in the mind two sorts of decisions—one sort illusive, and the other sort free ?

If our folly does not carry us so far as this, we must necessarily admit, that the decision of the mind which is believed to be free, is not distinguishable from the imagination or memory, and is nothing more than the affirmation, which an idea, by virtue of being an idea, necessarily involves. Wherefore these decisions of the mind arise in the mind by the same necessity, as the ideas of things actually existing.

Therefore, those who believe that they speak or keep silence or act in any way from the free decision of their mind, do but dream with their eyes open.

It may be objected, if man does not act from free will, what will happen if the incentives to action are equally balanced as in the case of Buridan's ass? Will he perish of hunger and thirst? If I say that he would, I shall seem to have in my thoughts an ass or the statue of a man rather than actual man. If I say that he would not, he would then determine his own action, and would consequently possess the faculty of going and doing whatever he liked.

I am quite ready to admit, that a man placed in the equilibrium described (namely, as perceiving nothing but hunger and thirst, a certain food and a certain drink, each equally distant from him) would die of hunger and thirst. If I am asked, whether such an one should not rather be considered an ass than a man, I answer that I do not know, neither do I know how a man should be considered, who hangs himself, or how we should consider children, fools, madmen, etc.

It remains to point out the advantages of a knowledge of this doctrine as bearing on conduct, and this may be easily gathered from what has been said. The doctrine is good.

1. Inasmuch as it teaches us to act solely according to the decree of God, and to be partakers in the Divine nature, and so much the more, as we perform more perfect actions and more and more understand God. Such a doctrine not only completely tranquillizes our spirit, but also shows us where our highest happiness and blessedness is, namely, solely in the knowledge of God, whereby we are led to act only as love and piety shall bid us. We may thus clearly understand, how far astray from a true estimate of virtue are those who expect to be decorated by God with high rewards for their virtue, and their best actions, as for



having endured the direst slavery ; as if virtue and the service of God were not in itself happiness and perfect freedom.

2. Inasmuch as it teaches us, how we ought to conduct ourselves with respect to the gifts of fortune, or matters which are not in our own power, and do not follow from our nature. For it shows us that we should await and endure fortune's smiles or frowns with an equal mind, seeing that all things follow from the eternal decree of God by the same necessity, as it follows from the essence of a triangle, that the three angles are equal to two right angles.

3. This doctrine raises social life, inasmuch as it teaches us to hate no man, neither to despise, to deride, to envy or to be angry with any. Further, as it tells us that each should be content with his own, and helpful to his neighbour, not from any womanish pity, favour or superstition, but solely by the guidance of reason, according as the time and occasion demand.

4. Lastly, this doctrine confers no small advantage on the commonwealth ; for it teaches how citizens should be governed and led, not so as to become slaves, but so that they may freely do whatsoever things are best.

### *The Instinct of Spiritual Self-Preservation*

EVERYTHING, IN SO FAR AS IT IS IN ITSELF, ENDEAVOURS TO PERSIST IN ITS OWN BEING.

THE ENDEAVOUR, WHEREWITH EVERYTHING ENDEAVOURS TO PERSIST IN ITS OWN BEING, IS NOTHING ELSE BUT THE ACTUAL ESSENCE OF THE THING IN QUESTION.

THE MIND, BOTH IN SO FAR AS IT HAS CLEAR AND DISTINCT IDEAS, AND ALSO IN SO FAR AS IT HAS CONFUSED IDEAS, ENDEAVOURS TO PERSIST IN ITS BEING FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD, AND OF THIS ENDEAVOUR IT IS CONSCIOUS.

This endeavour is called **APPETITE** ; it is, in fact, nothing else but man's essence, from the nature of which necessarily follows all those results which tend to its preservation ; and which man has thus been determined to perform.

Further,-between appetite and desire there is no difference, except that the term desire is generally applied to men, in so far as they are conscious of their appetite, and may accordingly be thus defined : **DESIRE IS APPETITE WITH CONSCIOUSNESS THEREOF**. It is thus plain from what has been said, that in no case do we strive for, wish for, long for or desire anything, because we deem it to be good, but on the other hand we deem a thing to be good, because we strive for it, wish for it, long for it or desire it.

### *The Three Basic Emotions*

**PLEASURE IS THE TRANSITION OF A MAN FROM A LESS TO A GREATER PERFECTION.**

**PAIN IS THE TRANSITION OF A MAN FROM A GREATER TO A LESS PERFECTION.**

**WHAT I MEAN BY DESIRE I HAVE EXPLAINED ABOVE.**

Beyond these three I recognize no other primary emotion ; all other emotions arise from these three.

### *Active and Passive Emotions*

I say that we **ACT** when anything takes place, either within us or externally to us, whereof we are the adequate cause ; that is when through our nature something takes place within us or externally to us, which can through our nature alone be clearly and distinctly understood. On the other hand, I say that we are passive as regards something when that something takes place within us, or follows

from our nature externally, we being only the partial cause.

### *On Passive Emotions*

LOVE IS NOTHING ELSE BUT PLEASURE ACCOMPANIED BY THE IDEA OF AN EXTERNAL CAUSE : HATE IS NOTHING ELSE BUT PAIN ACCOMPANIED BY THE IDEA OF AN EXTERNAL CAUSE.

IF THE MIND HAS ONCE BEEN AFFECTED BY TWO EMOTIONS AT THE SAME TIME, IT WILL, WHENEVER IT IS AFTERWARD AFFECTED BY ONE OF THE TWO, BE ALSO AFFECTED BY THE OTHER.

ANYTHING CAN ACCIDENTALLY BE THE CAUSE OF PLEASURE, PAIN OR DESIRE.

SIMPLY FROM THE FACT THAT WE CONCEIVE THAT A GIVEN OBJECT HAS SOME POINT OF RESEMBLANCE WITH ANOTHER OBJECT WHICH IS WONT TO AFFECT THE MIND PLEASURABLY OR PAINFULLY, ALTHOUGH THE POINT OF RESEMBLANCE BE NOT THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF THE SAID EMOTIONS, WE SHALL STILL REGARD THE FIRST-NAMED OBJECT WITH LOVE OR HATE.

WE ENDEAVOUR TO AFFIRM, CONCERNING OURSELVES, AND CONCERNING WHAT WE LOVE, EVERYTHING THAT WE CONCEIVE TO AFFECT PLEASURABLY OURSELVES, OR THE LOVED OBJECT. CONTRARIWISE, WE ENDEAVOUR TO NEGATIVE EVERYTHING WHICH WE CONCEIVE TO AFFECT PAINFULLY OURSELVES OR THE LOVED OBJECT.

Thus we see that it may readily happen, that a man may easily think too highly of himself, or a loved object, and, contrariwise, too meanly of a hated object. This feeling is called PRIDE, in reference to the man who thinks too highly of himself, and is a species of madness, wherein

a man dreams with his eyes open, thinking that he can accomplish all things that fall within the scope of his conception, and thereupon accounting them real, and exulting in them, so long as he is unable to conceive anything which excludes their existence, and determines his own power of action. PRIDE, therefore, is PLEASURE SPRINGING FROM A MAN THINKING TOO HIGHLY OF HIMSELF. Again, the PLEASURE WHICH ARISES FROM A MAN THINKING TOO HIGHLY OF ANOTHER is called OVER-ESTEEM. Whereas the PLEASURE WHICH ARISES FROM THINKING TOO LITTLE OF A MAN is called DISDAIN.

WE ENDEAVOUR TO BRING ABOUT WHATSOEVER WE CONCEDE TO CONDUCE TO PLEASURE ; BUT WE ENDEAVOUR TO REMOVE OR DESTROY WHATSOEVER WE CONCEIVE TO BE TRULY REPUGNANT THERETO, OR TO CONDUCE TO PAIN.

BY THE VERY FACT THAT WE CONCEIVE A THING, WHICH IS LIKE OURSELVES, AND WHICH WE HAVE NOT REGARDED WITH ANY EMOTION, TO BE AFFECTED WITH ANY EMOTION, WE ARE OURSELVES AFFECTED WITH A LIKE EMOTION (*affectus*).

IF WE CONCEIVE THAT ANYONE LOVES, DESIRES OR HATES ANYTHING WHICH WE OURSELVES LOVE, DESIRE OR HATE, WE SHALL THEREUPON REGARD THE THING IN QUESTION WITH MORE STEADFAST LOVE, ETC. ON THE CONTRARY, IF WE THINK THAT ANYONE SHRINKS FROM SOMETHING THAT WE LOVE, WE SHALL UNDERGO VACILLATION OF SOUL.

From the foregoing, it follows that everyone endeavours, as far as possible, to cause others to love what he himself loves, and to hate what he himself hates.

Wherefore we see that everyone by nature desires (*appetere*), that the rest of mankind should live according to his own individual disposition : when such a desire is equally present in all, everyone stands in everyone else's

way, and in wishing to be loved or praised by all, all become mutually hateful.

IF WE CONCEIVE THAT ANYONE TAKES DELIGHT IN SOMETHING, WHICH ONLY ONE PERSON CAN POSSESS, WE SHALL ENDEAVOUR TO BRING IT ABOUT THAT THE MAN IN QUESTION SHALL NOT GAIN POSSESSION THEREOF.

We thus see that man's nature is generally so constituted, that he takes pity on those who fare ill, and envies those who fare well with an amount of hatred proportioned to his own love for the goods in their possession. Further, we see that from the same property of human nature, whence it follows that men are merciful, it follows also that they are envious and ambitious. Lastly, if we make appeal to Experience, we shall find that she entirely confirms what we have said ; more especially if we turn our attention to the first years of our life. We find that children, whose body is continually, as it were, in equilibrium, laugh or cry simply because they see others laughing or crying ; moreover, they desire forthwith to imitate whatever they see others doing, and to possess themselves whatever they conceive as delighting others : inasmuch as the images of things are, as we have said, modifications of the human body, or modes wherein the human body is affected and disposed by external causes to act in this or that manner.

IF A MAN HAS BEGUN TO HATE AN OBJECT OF HIS LOVE, SO THAT LOVE IS THOROUGHLY DESTROYED, HE WILL REGARD IT WITH MORE HATRED THAN IF HE HAD NEVER LOVED IT, AND HIS HATRED WILL BE IN PROPORTION TO THE STRENGTH OF HIS FORMER LOVE.

HE, WHO CONCEIVES HIMSELF TO BE HATED BY ANOTHER, AND BELIEVES THAT HE HAS GIVEN HIM NO CAUSE FOR HATRED, WILL HATE THAT OTHER IN RETURN.

IF ANYONE CONCEIVES THAT HE IS LOVED BY ANOTHER, AND BELIEVES THAT HE HAS GIVEN NO CAUSE FOR SUCH LOVE, HE WILL LOVE THAT OTHER IN RETURN.

IF A MAN HAS BEEN AFFECTED PLEASURABLY OR PAINFULLY BY ANYONE, OF A CLASS OR NATION DIFFERENT FROM HIS OWN, THE MAN WILL FEEL LOVE OR HATRED NOT ONLY TO THE INDIVIDUAL STRANGER, BUT ALSO TO THE WHOLE CLASS OR NATION WHERE TO HE BELONGS.

HATRED IS INCREASED BY BEING RECIPROCATED, AND CAN ON THE OTHER HAND BE DESTROYED BY LOVE.

HATRED WHICH IS COMPLETELY VANQUISHED BY LOVE PASSES INTO LOVE : AND LOVE IS THEREUPON GREATER THAN IF HATRED HAD NOT PRECEDED IT.

THERE ARE AS MANY KINDS OF PLEASURE, OF PAIN, OF DESIRE AND OF EVERY EMOTION COMPOUNDED OF THESE, SUCH AS VACILLATIONS OF SPIRIT, OR DERIVED FROM THESE, SUCH AS LOVE, HATRED, HOPE, FEAR, ETC., AS THERE ARE KINDS OF OBJECTS WHEREBY WE ARE AFFECTED.

ANY EMOTION OF A GIVEN INDIVIDUAL DIFFERS FROM THE EMOTION OF ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL, ONLY IN SO FAR AS THE ESSENCE OF THE ONE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERS FROM THE ESSENCE OF THE OTHER.

### *On Active Emotions*

BESIDES PLEASURE AND DESIRE, WHICH ARE PASSIVITIES OR PASSIONS, THERE ARE OTHER EMOTIONS DERIVED FROM PLEASURE AND DESIRE, WHICH ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO US IN SO FAR AS WE ARE ACTIVE.

AMONG ALL THE EMOTIONS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE MIND AS ACTIVE, THERE ARE NONE WHICH CANNOT BE REFERRED TO PLEASURE OR PAIN.

For all emotions can be referred to desire, pleasure or pain. Now by pain we mean that the mind's power of thinking is diminished or checked ; therefore, in so far as the mind feels pain, its power of understanding, that is, of activity, is diminished or checked ; therefore, no painful emotions can be attributed to the mind in virtue of its being active, but only emotions of pleasure and desire, which are attributable to the mind in that condition.

All actions following from emotion, which are attributable to the mind in virtue of its understanding, I set down to STRENGTH OF CHARACTER (*fortitudo*), which I divide into COURAGE (*animositas*) and HIGH-MINDEDNESS (*generositas*). By COURAGE I mean THE DESIRE WHEREBY EVERY MAN STRIVES TO PRESERVE HIS OWN BEING IN ACCORDANCE SOLELY WITH THE DICTATES OF REASON. By HIGH-MINDEDNESS I mean THE DESIRE WHEREBY EVERY MAN ENDEAVOURS, SOLELY UNDER THE DICTATES OF REASON, TO AID OTHER MEN AND TO UNITE THEM TO HIMSELF IN FRIENDSHIP. Those actions, therefore, which have regard solely to the good of the agent I set down to courage, those which aim at the good of others I set down to high-mindedness. Thus temperance, sobriety and presence of mind in danger, etc., are varieties of courage ; courtesy, mercy, etc., are varieties of high-mindedness.

## ON PERFECTION AND IMPERFECTION, GOOD AND EVIL

**W**HEN A MAN HAS PURPOSED TO MAKE A GIVEN THING, and has brought it to perfection, his work will be pronounced perfect, not only by himself, but by everyone who rightly knows, or thinks that he knows, the intention and aim of its author. For instance, suppose anyone sees a work (which I assume to be not yet completed) and knows that the aim of the author of that work is to build a house, he will call the work imperfect ; he will, on the other hand, call it perfect, as soon as he sees that it is carried through to the end, which its author had purposed for it. But if a man sees a work, the like whereof he has never seen before, and if he knows not the intention of the artificer, he plainly cannot know whether that work be perfect or imperfect. Such seems to be the primary meaning of these terms.

But, after men began to form general ideas, to think out types of houses, buildings, towers, etc., and to prefer certain types to others, it came about, that each man called perfect that which he saw agree with the general idea he had formed of the thing in question, and called imperfect that which he saw agree less with his own preconceived type, even though it had evidently been completed in accordance with the idea of its artificer.

This seems to be the only reason for calling natural phenomena, which, indeed, are not made with human hands, perfect or imperfect : for men are wont to form general ideas of things natural, no less than of things artificial, and such ideas they hold as types, believing that



Nature (who they think does nothing without an object) has them in view, and has set them as types before herself. Therefore, when they behold something in Nature, which does not wholly conform to the preconceived type which they have formed of the thing in question, they say that Nature has fallen short or has blundered, and has left her work incomplete.

Thus we see that men are wont to style natural phenomena perfect or imperfect rather from their own prejudices, than from true knowledge of what they pronounce upon. For nature does not work with an end in view. For the eternal infinite being, which we call God or nature, acts by the same necessity as that whereby it exists.

The reason or cause why God or nature exists, and the reason why he acts, are one and the same. Therefore, as he does not exist for the sake of an end, so neither does he act for the sake of an end ; of his existence and of his action there is neither origin nor end.

Wherefore, a cause which is called final is nothing else but human desire, in so far as it is considered as the origin or cause of anything. For example, when we say that to be inhabited is the final cause of this or that house, we mean nothing more than that a man, conceiving the convenience of household life, had a desire to build a house. Wherefore, the being inhabited, in so far as it is regarded as a final cause, is nothing else but this particular desire, which is really the efficient cause ; it is regarded as the primary cause, because men are generally ignorant of the causes of their desires. They are, as I have often said already, conscious of their own actions and appetites, but ignorant of the causes whereby they are determined to any particular desire ; therefore, the common saying that nature sometimes falls short, or blunders, and produces things which are imperfect.

Perfection and imperfection, then, are in reality merely

modes of thinking, or notions which we form from a comparison among one another of individuals of the same species ; hence I said above, that by reality and perfection I mean the same thing. For we are wont to refer all the individual things in nature to one genus, which is called the highest genus, namely, to the category of being, whereto absolutely all individuals in nature belong. Thus, in so far as we refer the individuals in nature to this category, and comparing them one with another, find that some possess more of being or reality than others, we, to this extent, say that some are more perfect than others. Again, in so far as we attribute to them anything implying negation—as term, end, infirmity, etc.—we, to this extent, call them imperfect, because they do not affect our mind so much as the things which we call perfect, not because they have any intrinsic deficiency, or because nature has blundered. For nothing lies within the scope of a thing's nature, save that which follows from the necessity of the nature of its efficient cause, and whatsoever follows from the necessity of the nature of its efficient cause necessarily comes to pass.

As for the terms GOOD and BAD, they indicate no positive quality in things regarded in themselves, but are merely modes of thinking, or notions which we form from the comparison of things one with another. Thus one and the same thing can be at the same time good, bad and indifferent. For instance, music is good for him that is melancholy, bad for him that mourns ; for him that is deaf, it is neither good nor bad.

Nevertheless, though this be so, the terms should still be retained. For, inasmuch as we desire to form an idea of man as a type of human nature which we may hold in view, it will be useful for us to retain the terms in question, in the sense I have indicated.

In what follows, then, I shall mean by " good " that

which we certainly know to be a means of approaching more nearly to the type of human nature, which we have set before ourselves ; by "bad," that which we certainly know to be a hindrance to us in approaching the said type.

Again, we shall say that men are more perfect, or more imperfect, in proportion as they approach more or less nearly to the said type. For it must be specially remarked that, when I say that a man passes from a lesser to a greater perfection, or *vice versa*, I do not mean that he is changed from one essence or reality to another ; for instance, a horse would be as completely destroyed by being changed into a man, as by being changed into an insect. What I mean is, that we conceive the thing's power of action, in so far as this is understood by its nature, to be increased or diminished.

Lastly, by perfection in general I shall, as I have said, mean reality—in other words, each thing's essence, in so far as it exists, and operates in a particular manner.

## THE STRENGTH OF THE EMOTIONS

**W**E ARE ONLY PASSIVE, IN SO FAR AS WE ARE A PART OF NATURE, WHICH CANNOT BE CONCEIVED BY ITSELF WITHOUT OTHER PARTS.

THE FORCE WHEREBY A MAN PERSISTS IN EXISTING IS LIMITED, AND IS INFINITELY SURPASSED BY THE POWER OF EXTERNAL CAUSES.

MAN IS NECESSARILY ALWAYS A PREY TO HIS PASSIONS, HE FOLLOWS AND OBEYS THE GENERAL ORDER OF NATURE, AND HE ACCOMMODATES HIMSELF THERETO, AS MUCH AS THE NATURE OF THINGS DEMANDS.

THE FORCE OF ANY PASSION OR EMOTION CAN OVERCOME THE REST OF A MAN'S ACTIVITIES OR POWER, SO THAT THE EMOTION BECOMES OBSTINATELY FIXED TO HIM.

AN EMOTION CAN ONLY BE CONTROLLED OR DESTROYED BY ANOTHER EMOTION CONTRARY THERETO, AND WITH MORE POWER FOR CONTROLLING EMOTION.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL IS NOTHING ELSE BUT THE EMOTIONS OF PLEASURE OR PAIN, IN SO FAR AS WE ARE CONSCIOUS THEREOF.

A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL CANNOT CHECK ANY EMOTION BY VIRTUE OF BEING TRUE, BUT ONLY IN SO FAR AS IT IS CONSIDERED AS AN EMOTION.

DESIRE ARISING FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND BAD CAN BE QUENCHED OR CHECKED BY MANY OF THE OTHER DESIRES ARISING FROM THE EMOTIONS WHEREBY WE ARE ASSAILED.

DESIRE ARISING FROM PLEASURE IS STRONGER THAN DESIRE ARISING FROM PAIN.

## VIRTUE AND THE LAWS OF REASON

### I. *General*

**B**Y “VIRTUE” (*virtus*) AND “POWER” I MEAN THE same thing ; that is, virtue, in so far as it is referred to man, is a man’s nature or essence, in so far as it has the power of effecting what can only be understood by the laws of that nature.

As reason makes no demands contrary to nature, it demands that every man should love himself, should seek that which is useful to him—I mean, that which is really useful to him, should desire everything which really brings man to greater perfection, and should, each for himself, endeavour as far as he can to preserve his own being.

Again, as virtue is nothing else but action in accordance with the laws of one’s own nature, and as no one endeavours to preserve his own being, except in accordance with the laws of his own nature, it follows, **FIRST**, that the foundation of virtue is the endeavour to preserve one’s own being, and that happiness consists in man’s power of preserving his own being ; **SECONDLY**, that virtue is to be desired for its own sake, and that there is nothing more excellent or more useful to us, for the sake of which we should desire it ; **THIRDLY** and lastly, that suicides are weak-minded, and are overcome by external causes repugnant to their nature.

The human body stands in need for its preservation of a number of other bodies, by which it is continually, so to speak, regenerated.

Hence it follows that we can never arrive at doing without all external things for the preservation of our being or living, so as to have no relations with things which are outside ourselves. Again, if we consider our mind, we see that our intellect would be more imperfect, if mind were alone, and could understand nothing besides itself. There are, then, many things outside ourselves, which are useful to us, and are, therefore, to be desired. Of such none can be discerned more excellent, than those which are in entire agreement with our nature. For if, for example, two individuals of entirely the same nature are united, they form a combination twice as powerful as either of them singly.

Therefore, to man there is nothing more useful than man—nothing, I repeat, more excellent for preserving their being can be wished for by men, than that all should so in all points agree, that the minds and bodies of all should form, as it were, one single mind and one single body, and that all should, with one consent, as far as they are able, endeavour to preserve their being, and all with one consent seek what is useful to them all.

Hence, men who are governed by reason—that is, who seek what is useful to them in accordance with reason—desire for themselves nothing which they do not also desire for the rest of mankind, and, consequently, are just, faithful and honourable in their conduct.

## 2. *In the Life of the Individual*

• EVERY MAN, BY THE LAWS OF HIS NATURE, NECESSARILY DESIRES OR SHRINKS FROM THAT WHICH HE DEEMS TO BE GOOD OR BAD.

THE MORE EVERY MAN ENDEAVOURS, AND IS ABLE TO SEEK WHAT IS USEFUL TO HIM—IN OTHER WORDS, TO PRESERVE HIS OWN BEING—THE MORE IS HE ENDOWED WITH

VIRTUE ; ON THE CONTRARY, IN PROPORTION AS A MAN NEGLECTS TO SEEK WHAT IS USEFUL TO HIM, THAT IS, TO PRESERVE HIS OWN BEING, HE IS WANTING IN POWER.

TO ACT ABSOLUTELY IN OBEDIENCE TO VIRTUE IS IN US THE SAME THING AS TO ACT, TO LIVE OR TO PRESERVE ONE'S BEING (THESE THREE TERMS ARE IDENTICAL IN MEANING) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DICTATES OF REASON ON THE BASIS OF SEEKING WHAT IS USEFUL TO ONE'S SELF.

WHATSOEVER WE ENDEAVOUR IN OBEDIENCE TO REASON IS NOTHING FURTHER THAN TO UNDERSTAND ; NEITHER DOES THE MIND, IN SO FAR AS IT MAKES USE OF REASON, JUDGE ANYTHING TO BE USEFUL TO IT, SAVE SUCH THINGS AS ARE CONDUCTIVE TO UNDERSTANDING.

WE KNOW NOTHING TO BE CERTAINLY GOOD OR EVIL, SAVE SUCH THINGS AS REALLY CONDUCE TO UNDERSTANDING, OR SUCH AS ARE ABLE TO HINDER US FROM UNDERSTANDING.

THE MIND'S HIGHEST GOOD IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND THE MIND'S HIGHEST VIRTUE IS TO KNOW GOD.

### *3. In the Community*

NO INDIVIDUAL THING, WHICH IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM OUR OWN NATURE, CAN HELP OR CHECK OUR POWER OF ACTIVITY, AND ABSOLUTELY NOTHING CAN DO US GOOD OR HARM, UNLESS IT HAS SOMETHING IN COMMON WITH OUR NATURE.

IN SO FAR AS A THING IS IN HARMONY WITH OUR NATURE, IT IS NECESSARILY GOOD.

MEN CAN DIFFER IN NATURE, IN SO FAR AS THEY ARE ASSAILED BY THOSE EMOTIONS, WHICH ARE PASSIONS, OR



PASSIVE STATES ; AND TO THIS EXTENT ONE AND THE SAME MAN IS VARIABLE AND INCONSTANT.

IN SO FAR AS MEN ARE ASSAILED BY EMOTIONS WHICH ARE PASSIONS, THEY CAN BE CONTRARY ONE TO ANOTHER.

IN SO FAR ONLY AS MEN LIVE IN OBEDIENCE TO REASON, DO THEY ALWAYS NECESSARILY AGREE IN NATURE.

There is no individual thing in nature, which is more useful to man, than a man who lives in obedience to reason. For that thing is to man most useful, which is most in harmony with his nature ; that is, obviously, man. But man acts absolutely according to the laws of his nature, when he lives in obedience to reason, and to this extent only is always necessarily in harmony with the nature of another man ; wherefore among individual things nothing is more useful to man, than a man who lives in obedience to reason.

As every man seeks most that which is useful to him, so are men most useful one to another. For the more a man seeks what is useful to him and endeavours to preserve himself, the more is he endowed with virtue, or, what is the same thing, the more is he endowed with power to act according to the laws of his own nature, that is to live in obedience to reason. But men are most in natural harmony, when they live in obedience to reason ; therefore men will be most useful one to another, when each seeks most that which is useful to him.

\* What we have just shown is attested by experience so conspicuously, that it is in the mouth of nearly everyone : " Man is to man a God." Yet it rarely happens that men live in obedience to reason, for things are so ordered among them, that they are generally envious and troublesome one to another. Nevertheless they are scarcely able to lead a solitary life, so that the definition of man as a social

animal has met with general assent ; in fact, men do derive from social life much more convenience than injury. Let satirists then laugh their fill at human affairs, let theologians rail, and let misanthropes praise to their utmost the life of untutored rusticity, let them heap contempt on men and praises on beasts ; when all is said, they will find that men can provide for their wants much more easily by mutual help, and that only by uniting their forces can they escape from the dangers that on every side beset them : not to say how much more excellent and worthy of our knowledge it is, to study the actions of men than the actions of beasts.

THE HIGHEST GOOD OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW VIRTUE IS COMMON TO ALL, AND THEREFORE ALL CAN EQUALLY REJOICE THEREIN.

For to act virtuously is to act in obedience with reason, and whatsoever we endeavour to do in obedience to reason is to understand ; therefore the highest good for those who follow after virtue is to know God ; that is a good which is common to all and can be possessed by all men equally, in so far as they are of the same nature.

THE GOOD WHICH EVERY MAN, WHO FOLLOWS AFTER VIRTUE, DESIRES FOR HIMSELF HE WILL ALSO DESIRE FOR OTHER MEN, AND SO MUCH THE MORE, IN PROPORTION AS HE HAS A GREATER KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

He who, guided by emotion only, endeavours to cause others to love what he loves himself, and to make the rest of the world live according to his own fancy, acts solely by impulse, and is, therefore, hateful, especially to those who take delight in something different, and accordingly study and, by similar impulse, endeavour to make men live in accordance with what pleases themselves. Again, as the

highest good sought by men under the guidance of emotion is often such, that it can only be possessed by a single individual, it follows that those who love it are not consistent in their intentions, but, while they delight to sing its praises, fear to be believed.

But he, who endeavours to lead men by reason, does not act by impulse but courteously and kindly, and his intention is always consistent.

Again, whatsoever we desire and do, whereof we are the cause in so far as we possess the idea of God, or know God, I set down to RELIGION. The desire of well-doing, which is engendered by a life according to reason, I call PIETY. Further, the desire, whereby a man living according to reason is bound to associate others with himself in friendship, I call HONOUR; by HONOURABLE I mean that which is praised by men living according to reason, and by BASE I mean that which is repugnant to the gaining of friendship. I have also shown in addition what are the foundations of a state; and the difference between true virtue and infirmity may be readily gathered from what I have said; namely, that true virtue is nothing else but living in accordance with reason; while infirmity is nothing else but man's allowing himself to be led by things which are external to himself, and to be by them determined to act in a manner demanded by the general disposition of things rather than by his own nature considered solely in itself.

It is plain from the foregoing that the law against the slaughtering of animals is founded rather on vain superstition and womanish pity than on sound reason. The rational quest of what is useful to us further teaches us the necessity of associating ourselves with our fellow-men, but not with beasts, or things, whose nature is different from our own; we have the same rights in respect to them as they have in respect to us. Nay, as everyone's right is

defined by his virtue, or power, men have far greater rights over beasts than beasts have over men. Still I do not deny that beasts feel : what I deny is, that we may not consult our own advantage and use them as we please, treating them in the way which best suits us ; for their nature is not like ours, and their emotions are naturally different from human emotions.

*Notes on Man in the State of Nature  
and in Society*

Man exists by sovereign natural right, and, consequently, by sovereign natural right performs those actions which follow from the necessity of his own nature ; therefore by sovereign natural right every man judges what is good and what is bad, takes care of his own advantage according to his own disposition, avenges the wrongs done to him, and endeavours to preserve that which he loves and to destroy that which he hates.

Now, if men lived under the guidance of reason, everyone would remain in possession of this his right, without any injury being done to his neighbour. But seeing that they are a prey to their emotions, which far surpass human power or virtue, they are often drawn in different directions, and being at variance one with another, stand in need of mutual help.

Wherefore, in order that men may live together in harmony, and may aid one another, it is necessary that they should forgo their natural right, and, for the sake of security, refrain from all actions which can injure their fellow-men. The way in which this end can be attained, so that men who are necessarily a prey to their emotions, inconstant and diverse, should be able to render each other mutually secure, and feel mutual trust, is evident. It is there shown, that an emotion can only be restrained by

an emotion stronger than, and contrary to men avoid inflicting injury through fear greater injury themselves.

On this law society can be established, so long in its own hand the right, possessed by everyone inflicting injury, and pronouncing on good and evil ; and provided it also possesses the power to lay down a general rule of conduct, and to pass laws sanctioned, not by reason, which is powerless in restraining emotion, but by threats. Such a society established with laws and the power of preserving itself is called a STATE, while those who live under its protection are called CITIZENS.

We may readily understand that there is in the state of nature nothing, which by universal consent is pronounced good or bad ; for in the state of nature everyone thinks solely of his own advantage, and according to his disposition, with reference only to his individual advantage, decides what is good or bad, being bound by no law to anyone besides himself.

In the state of nature, therefore, sin is inconceivable ; it can only exist in a state, where good and evil are pronounced on by common consent, and where everyone is bound to obey the State authority. SIN, then, is nothing else but disobedience, which is therefore punished by the right of the State only. Obedience, on the other hand, is set down as MERIT, inasmuch as a man is thought worthy of merit, if he takes delight in the advantages which a State provides.

Again, in the state of nature, no one is by common consent master of anything, nor is there anything in nature which can be said to belong to one man rather than another : all things are common to all. Hence, in the state of nature, we can conceive no wish to render to every man his own, or to deprive a man of that which belongs to him ; in other words, there is nothing in the state of nature answering

to justice and injustice. Such ideas are only possible in a social state, when it is decreed by common consent what belongs to one man and what to another.

From all these considerations it is evident, that justice and injustice, sin and merit, are extrinsic ideas, and not attributes which display the nature of the mind. But I have said enough.

## ON EVALUATION OF THE EMOTIONS

**P**LEASURE IN ITSELF IS NOT BAD BUT GOOD ; CONTRARI-  
WISE, PAIN IN ITSELF IS BAD.

MIRTH CANNOT BE EXCESSIVE, BUT IS ALWAYS GOOD ;  
CONTRARIWISE, MELANCHOLY IS ALWAYS BAD.

Mirth is pleasure, which, in so far as it is referred to the body, consists in all parts of the body being affected equally : that is, the body's power of activity is increased or aided in such a manner, that the several parts maintain their former proportion of motion and rest.

Mirth, which I have stated to be good, can be conceived more easily than it can be observed. For the emotions, whereby we are daily assailed, are generally referred to some part of the body which is affected more than the rest ; hence the emotions are generally excessive, and so fix the mind in the contemplation of one object, that it is unable to think of others ; and although men, as a rule, are a prey to many emotions—and very few are found who are always assailed by one and the same—yet there are cases where one and the same emotion remains obstinately fixed. We sometimes see men so absorbed in one object, that, although it be not present, they think they have it before them ; when this is the case with a man who is not asleep, we say he is delirious or mad ; nor are those persons who are inflamed with love, and who dream all night and all day about nothing but their mistress, or some

woman; considered as less mad, for they are made objects of ridicule. But when a miser thinks of nothing but gain or money, or when an ambitious man thinks of nothing but glory, they are not reckoned to be mad, because they are generally harmful, and are thought worthy of being hated. But, in reality, Avarice, Ambition, Lust, etc., are species of madness, though they may not be reckoned among diseases.

#### HATRED CAN NEVER BE GOOD.

Envy, derision, contempt, anger, revenge and other emotions attributable to hatred, or arising therefrom, are bad.

Between derision and laughter I recognize a great difference. For laughter, as also jocularly, is merely pleasure ; therefore, so long as it be not excessive, it is in itself good. Assuredly, nothing forbids man to enjoy himself, save grim and gloomy superstition. For why is it more lawful to satiate one's hunger and thirst than to drive away one's melancholy ?

I reason, and have convinced myself as follows : No deity, nor anyone else, save the envious, takes pleasure in my infirmity and discomfort, nor sets down to my virtue the tears, sobs, fear and the like, which are signs of infirmity of spirit ; on the contrary, the greater the pleasure wherewith we are affected, the greater the perfection whereto we pass ; in other words, the more must we necessarily partake of the divine nature.

Therefore, to make use of what comes in our way, and to enjoy it as much as possible (not to the point of satiety, for that would not be enjoyment), is the part of a wise man. I say it is the part of a wise man to refresh and recreate himself with moderate and pleasant food and drink, and also with perfumes, with the soft beauty of growing plants, with dress, with music, with many sports, with theatres



and the like, such as every man may make use of without injury to his neighbour.

For the human body is composed of very numerous parts, of diverse nature, which continually stand in need of fresh and varied nourishment, so that the whole body may be equally capable of performing all the actions, which follow from the necessity of its own nature ; and, consequently, so that the mind may also be equally capable of understanding many things simultaneously.

This way of life, then, agrees best with our principles, and also with general practice ; therefore, if there be any question of another plan, the plan we have mentioned is the best, and in every way to be commended.

HE WHO LIVES UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF REASON, ENDEAVOURS, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, TO RENDER BACK LOVE, OR KINDNESS, FOR OTHER MEN'S HATRED, ANGER, CONTEMPT, ETC., TOWARD HIM.

He who chooses to avenge wrongs with hatred is assuredly wretched. But he, who strives to conquer hatred with love, fights his battle in joy and confidence ; he withstands many as easily as one, and has very little need of fortune's aid. Those whom he vanquishes yield joyfully, not through failure, but through increase in their powers.

PITY, IN A MAN WHO LIVES UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF REASON, IS IN ITSELF BAD AND USELESS.

Pity is a pain, and therefore is in itself bad. The good effect which follows, namely, our endeavour to free the object of our pity from misery, is an action which we desire to do solely at the dictation of reason ; only at the dictation of reason are we able to perform any action, which we know for certain to be good ; thus, in a man who lives

under the guidance of reason, pity in itself is useless and bad.

WHEREFORE IT FOLLOWS THAT A MAN WHO LIVES UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF REASON DOES HIS UTMOST NOT TO BE TOUCHED BY COMPASSION.

He who rightly realizes that all things follow from the necessity of the divine nature, and come to pass in accordance with the eternal laws and rules of nature, will not find anything worthy of hatred, derision or contempt, nor will he bestow pity on anything, but to the utmost extent of human virtue he will endeavour to do well, as the saying is, and to rejoice. I am in this place expressly speaking of a man living under the guidance of reason. He who is moved to help others neither by reason nor by compassion, is rightly styled inhuman, for he seems unlike a man.

SELF-APPROVAL MAY ARISE FROM REASON, AND THAT WHICH ARISES FROM REASON IS THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE.

HUMILITY IS NOT A VIRTUE, OR DOES NOT ARISE FROM REASON.

REPENTANCE IS NOT A VIRTUE, OR DOES NOT ARISE FROM REASON ; BUT HE WHO REPENTS OF AN ACTION IS DOUBLY WRETCHED OR INFIRM.

As men seldom live under the guidance of reason, these two emotions, namely, Humility and Repentance, as also Hope and Fear, bring more good than harm ; hence, as we must sin, we had better sin in that direction. For, if all men who are a prey to emotion were all equally proud, they would shrink from nothing, and would fear

nothing ; how then could they be joined or linked together in bonds of union ? The crowd plays the tyrant, when it is not in fear ; hence we need not wonder that the prophets, who consulted the good, not of a few, but of all, so strenuously commended Humility, Repentance and Reverence. Indeed, those who are a prey to these emotions may be led much more easily than others to live under the guidance of reason, that is, to become free and to enjoy the life of the blessed.

EXTREME PRIDE OR DEJECTION INDICATES EXTREME IGNORANCE OF SELF.

EXTREME PRIDE OR DEJECTION INDICATES EXTREME INFIRMITY OF SPIRIT.

HE WHO IS LED BY FEAR, AND DOES GOOD IN ORDER TO ESCAPE EVIL, IS NOT LED BY REASON.

Superstitious persons, who know better how to rail at vice than how to teach virtue, and who strive not to guide men by reason, but so to restrain them that they would rather escape evil than love virtue, have no other aim but to make others as wretched as themselves ; wherefore it is nothing wonderful, if they be generally troublesome and odious to their fellow-men.

TO ALL THE ACTIONS, WHERETO WE ARE DETERMINED BY EMOTION WHEREIN THE MIND IS PASSIVE, WE CAN BE DETERMINED WITHOUT EMOTION BY REASON.

DESIRE WHICH SPRINGS FROM REASON CANNOT BE EXCESSIVE.

Under desire which springs from reason, we seek good directly, and shun evil indirectly.

This may be illustrated by the example of a sick and a healthy man. The sick man through fear of death eats what he naturally shrinks from, but the healthy man takes pleasure in his food, and thus gets a better enjoyment out of life, than if he were in fear of death, and desired directly to avoid it.

## ON THE RIGHT WAY OF LIFE

I. **A**LL OUR ENDEAVOURS OR DESIRES SO FOLLOW FROM the necessity of our nature, that they can be understood either through it alone, as their proximate cause, or by virtue of our being a part of nature, which cannot be adequately conceived through itself without other individuals.

2. Desires, which follow from our nature in such a manner, that they can be understood through it alone, are those which are referred to the mind, in so far as the latter is conceived to consist of adequate ideas : the remaining desires are only referred to the mind, in so far as it conceives things inadequately, and their force and increase are generally defined not by the power of man, but by the power of things external to us : wherefore the former are rightly called actions, the latter passions, for the former always indicate our power, the latter, on the other hand, show our infirmity and fragmentary knowledge.

3. Our actions, that is, those desires which are defined by man's power or reason, are always good. The rest may be either good or bad.

4. Thus in life it is before all things useful to perfect the understanding, or reason, as far as we can, and in this alone man's highest happiness or blessedness consists, indeed blessedness is nothing else but the contentment of spirit, which arises from the intuitive knowledge of God : now, to perfect the understanding is nothing else but to understand God, God's attributes, and the actions which follow from the necessity of his nature. Wherefore of a man, who is led by reason, the ultimate aim or highest

desire, whereby he seeks to govern all his fellows, is that whereby he is brought to the adequate conception of himself and of all things within the scope of his intelligence.

5. Therefore, without intelligence there is not rational life : and things are only good in so far as they aid man in his enjoyment of the intellectual life, which is defined by intelligence. Contrariwise, whatsoever things hinder man's perfecting of his reason, and capability to enjoy the rational life, are alone called evil.

6. As all things whereof man is the efficient cause are necessarily good, no evil can befall man except through external causes ; namely, by virtue of man being a part of universal nature, whose laws human nature is compelled to obey, and to conform to in almost infinite ways.

7. It is impossible that man should not be a part of nature, or that he should not follow her general order ; but if he be thrown among individuals whose nature is in harmony with his own, his power of action will thereby be aided and fostered, whereas, if he be thrown among such as are but very little in harmony with his nature, he will hardly be able to accommodate himself to them without undergoing a great change himself.

8. Whatsoever in nature we deem to be evil, or to be capable of injuring our faculty for existing and enjoying the rational life, we may endeavour to remove in whatever way seems safest to us ; on the other hand, whatsoever we deem to be good or useful for preserving our being, and enabling us to enjoy the rational life, we may appropriate to our use and employ as we think best. Everyone without exception may, by sovereign right of nature, do whatsoever he thinks will advance his own interest.

9. Nothing can be in more harmony with the nature of any given thing than other individuals of the same species ; therefore for man in the preservation of his being and the enjoyment of the rational life there is nothing more useful

than his fellow-man who is led by reason. Further, as we know not anything among individual things which is more excellent than a man led by reason, no man can better display the power of his skill and disposition, than in so training men, that they come at last to live under the dominion of their own reason.

10. In so far as men are influenced by envy or any kind of hatred, one toward another, they are at variance, and are therefore to be feared in proportion, as they are more powerful than their fellows.

11. Yet minds are not conquered by force, but by love and high-mindedness.

12. It is before all things useful to men to associate their ways of life, to bind themselves together with such bonds as they think most fitted to gather them all into unity, and generally to do whatsoever serves to strengthen friendship.

13. But for this there is need of skill and watchfulness. For men are diverse (seeing that those who live under the guidance of reason are few), yet are they generally envious and more prone to revenge than to sympathy. No small force of character is therefore required to take everyone as he is, and to restrain one's self from imitating the emotions of others. But those who carp at mankind, and are more skilled in railing at vice than in instilling virtue, and who break rather than strengthen men's dispositions, are hurtful both to themselves and others. Thus many from too great impatience of spirit, or from misguided religious zeal, have preferred to live among brutes rather than among men; as boys or youths, who cannot peaceably endure the chidings of their parents, will enlist as soldiers and choose the hardships of war and the despotic discipline in preference to the comforts of home and the admonitions of their father: suffering any burden to be put upon them, so long as they may spite their parents.

14. Therefore, although men are generally governed

in everything by their own lusts, yet their association in common brings many more advantages than drawbacks. Wherefore it is better to bear patiently the wrongs they may do us, and to strive to promote whatsoever serves to bring about harmony and friendship.

15. Those things, which beget harmony, are such as are attributable to justice, equity and honourable living. For men brook ill not only what is unjust or iniquitous, but also what is reckoned disgraceful, or that a man should slight the received customs of their society. For winning love those qualities are especially necessary which have regard to religion and piety.

16. Further, harmony is often the result of fear ; but such harmony is insecure. Further, fear arises from infirmity of spirit, and moreover belongs not to the exercise of reason : the same is true of compassion, though this latter seems to bear a certain resemblance to piety.

17. Men are also gained over by liberality, especially such as have not the means to buy what is necessary to sustain life. However, to give aid to every poor man is far beyond the power and the advantage of any private person. For the riches of any private person are wholly inadequate to meet such a call. Again, an individual man's resources of character are too limited for him to be able to make all men his friends. Hence providing for the poor is a duty, which falls on the State as a whole.

18. In accepting favours and in returning gratitude our duty must be wholly different (cf. pp. 57 and 58).

19. Again, meretricious love, that is, the lust of generation arising from bodily beauty, and generally every sort of love, which owns anything save freedom of soul as its cause, readily passes into hate ; unless indeed, what is worse, it is a species of madness ; and then it promotes discord rather than harmony.

20. As concerning marriage, it is certain that this is in



harmony with reason, if the desire for physical union be not engendered solely by bodily beauty, but also by the desire to beget children and to train them up wisely ; and moreover, if the love of both, to wit, of the man and of the woman, is not caused by bodily beauty only, but also by freedom of soul.

21. Furthermore, flattery begets harmony ; but only by means of the vile offence of slavishness or treachery. None are more readily taken with flattery than the proud, who wish to be first, but are not.

22. There is in abasement a spurious appearance of piety and religion. Although abasement is the opposite to pride, yet is he that abases himself most akin to the proud.

23. Shame also brings about harmony, but only in such matters as cannot be hid. Further, as shame is a species of pain, it does not concern the exercise of reason.

24. The remaining emotions of pain toward men are directly opposed to justice, equity, honour, piety and religion ; and, although indignation seems to bear a certain resemblance to equity, yet is life but lawless, where every man may pass judgment on another's deeds, and vindicate his own or other men's rights.

25. Correctness of conduct (*modestia*), that is, the desire of pleasing men which is determined by reason, is attributable to piety. But, if it spring from emotion, it is ambition, or the desire whereby men, under the false cloak of piety, generally stir up discords and seditions. For he who desires to aid his fellows either in word or in deed so that they may together enjoy the highest good, he, I say, will before all things strive to win them over with love : not to draw them into admiration, so that a system may be called after his name, nor to give any cause for envy. Further, in his conversation, he will shrink from talking of men's faults, and will be careful to speak but sparingly

of human infirmity ; but he will dwell at length on human virtue or power, and the way whereby it may be perfected. Thus will men be stirred not by fear, nor by aversion, but only by the emotion of joy, to endeavour, so far as in them lies, to live in obedience to reason.

26. Besides men, we know of no particular thing in nature in whose mind we may rejoice, and whom we can associate with ourselves in friendship or any sort of fellowship ; therefore, whatsoever there be in nature besides man, a regard for our advantage does not call on us to preserve, but to preserve or destroy according to its various capabilities, and to adapt to our use as best we may.

27. The advantage which we derive from things external to us, besides the experience and knowledge which we acquire from observing them, and from recombining their elements in different forms, is principally the preservation of the body ; from this point of view, those things are most useful which can so feed and nourish the body, that all its parts may rightly fulfil their functions. For, in proportion as the body is capable of being affected in a greater variety of ways, and of affecting external bodies in a great number of ways, so much the more is the mind capable of thinking. But there seem to be very few things of this kind in nature ; wherefore for the due nourishment of the body we must use many foods of diverse nature. For the human body is composed of very many parts of different nature, which stand in continual need of varied nourishment, so that the whole body may be equally capable of doing everything that can follow from its own nature, and consequently that the mind also may be equally capable of forming many perceptions.

28. Now for providing these nourishments the strength of each individual would hardly suffice, if men did not lend one another mutual aid. But money has furnished us with a token for everything : hence it is with the notion

of money that the mind of the multitude is chiefly engrossed : nay, it can hardly conceive any kind of pleasure which is not accompanied with the idea of money as cause.

29. This result is the fault only of those who seek money, not from poverty or to supply their necessary wants, but because they have learned the arts of gain, wherewith they bring themselves to great splendour. Certainly they nourish their bodies, according to custom, but scantily, believing that they lose as much of their wealth as they spend on the preservation of their body. But they who know the true use of money, and who fix the measure of wealth solely with regard to their actual needs, live content with little.

30. As, therefore, those things are good which assist the various parts of the body, and enable them to perform their functions ; and as pleasure consists in an increase of, or aid to, man's powers, in so far as he is composed of mind and body ; it follows that all those things which bring pleasure are good. But seeing that things do not work with the object of giving us pleasure, and that their power of action is not tempered to suit our advantage, and lastly, that pleasure is generally referred to one part of the body more than to the other parts ; therefore most emotions of pleasure (unless reason and watchfulness be at hand), and consequently the desires arising therefrom, may become excessive. Moreover, we may add that emotion leads us to pay most regard to what is agreeable in the present, nor can we estimate what is future with emotions equally vivid.

31. Superstition, on the other hand, seems to account as good all that brings pain, and as bad all that brings pleasure. However, as we have said above (p. 80), none but the envious take delight in my infirmity and trouble. For the greater the pleasure whereby we are affected, the greater is the perfection whereto we pass, and consequently

the more do we partake of the divine nature ; no pleasure can ever be evil, which is regulated by a true regard for our advantage. But contrariwise he, who is led by fear and does good only to avoid evil, is not guided by reason.

32. But human power is extremely limited, and is infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes ; we have not, therefore, an absolute power of shaping to our use those things which are without us. Nevertheless, we shall bear with an equal mind all that happens to us in contravention to the claims of our own advantage, so long as we are conscious that we have done our duty, and that the power which we possess is not sufficient to enable us to protect ourselves completely ; remembering that we are a part of universal nature, and that we follow her order. If we have a clear and distinct understanding of this, that part of our nature which is defined by intelligence, in other words the better part of ourselves, will assuredly acquiesce in what befalls us, and in such acquiescence will endeavour to persist. For, in so far as we are intelligent beings, we cannot desire anything save that which is necessary, nor yield absolute acquiescence to anything, save to that which is true ; wherefore, in so far as we have a right understanding of these things, the endeavour of the better part of ourselves is in harmony with the order of nature as a whole.

## THE FREE MAN

**W**E SHALL READILY SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A man who is led solely by emotion or opinion, and a man who is led by reason. The former, whether he will or no, performs actions whereof he is utterly ignorant ; the latter is his own master and only performs such actions, as he knows are of primary importance in life, and therefore chiefly desires ; wherefore I call the former a slave, and the latter a free man, concerning whose disposition and manner of life it will be well to make a few observations.

A FREE MAN THINKS OF DEATH LEAST OF ALL THINGS ; AND HIS WISDOM IS A MEDITATION NOT OF DEATH BUT OF LIFE.

IF MEN WERE BORN FREE, THEY WOULD, SO LONG AS THEY REMAINED FREE, FORM NO CONCEPTION OF GOOD AND EVIL.

THE VIRTUE OF A FREE MAN IS SEEN TO BE AS GREAT, WHEN IT DECLINES DANGERS, AS WHEN IT OVERCOMES THEM.

The free man is as courageous in timely retreat as in combat ; or, a free man shows equal courage or presence of mind, whether he elect to give battle or to retreat.

ONLY FREE MEN ARE THOROUGHLY GRATEFUL ONE TO ANOTHER.

THE FREE MAN, WHO LIVES AMONG THE IGNORANT, STRIVES, AS FAR AS HE CAN, TO AVOID RECEIVING FAVOURS FROM THEM.

Everyone judges what is good according to his disposition ; wherefore an ignorant man, who has conferred a benefit on another, puts his own estimate upon it, and, if it appears to be estimated less highly by the receiver, will feel pain. But the free man only desires to join other men to him in friendship, not repaying their benefits with others reckoned as of like value, but guiding himself and others by the free decision of reason, and doing only such things as he knows to be of primary importance. Therefore the free man, lest he should become hateful to the ignorant, or follow their desires rather than reason, will endeavour, as far as he can, to avoid receiving their favours.

I say, AS FAR AS HE CAN. For though men be ignorant, yet are they men, and in cases of necessity could afford us human aid, the most excellent of all things : therefore it is often necessary to accept favours from them, and consequently to repay such favours in kind ; we must, therefore, exercise caution in declining favours, lest we should have the appearance of despising those who bestow them, or of being, from avaricious motives, unwilling to requite them, and so give ground for offence by the very fact of striving to avoid it. Thus, in declining favours, we must look to the requirements of utility and courtesy.

THE FREE MAN NEVER ACTS FRAUDULENTLY, BUT ALWAYS IN GOOD FAITH.

THE MAN WHO IS GUIDED BY REASON, IS MORE FREE IN A STATE, WHERE HE LIVES UNDER A GENERAL SYSTEM OF LAW, THAN IN SOLITUDE, WHERE HE IS INDEPENDENT.

These and similar observations, which we have made on man's true freedom, may be referred to strength, that is, to courage and nobility of character. I do not think it worth while to prove separately all the properties of

strength ; much less need I show, that he that is strong hates no man, is angry with no man, envies no man, is indignant with no man, despises no man, and least of all things is proud. These propositions, and all that relate to the true way of life and religion, were proved above, that is, that hatred should be overcome with love, and that every man should desire for others the good which he seeks for himself. We may also repeat, that the strong man has ever first in his thoughts, that all things follow from the necessity of the divine nature ; so that whatsoever he deems to be hurtful and evil, and whatsoever, accordingly, seems to him impious, horrible, unjust and base, assumes that appearance owing to his own disordered, fragmentary and confused view of the universe. Wherefore he strives before all things to conceive things as they really are, and to remove the hindrances to true knowledge, such as are hatred, anger, envy, derision, pride and similar emotions, which I have mentioned above. Thus he endeavours, as we said before, as far as in him lies, to do good, and to go on his way rejoicing.

## CONQUEST OF THE EMOTIONS

**I**F WE REMOVE A DISTURBANCE OF THE SPIRIT, OR EMOTION, FROM THE THOUGHT OF AN EXTERNAL CAUSE, AND UNITE IT TO THE OTHER THOUGHTS, THEN WILL THE LOVE OR HATRED TOWARD THAT EXTERNAL CAUSE, AND ALSO THE VACILLATIONS OF SPIRIT WHICH ARISE FROM THESE EMOTIONS, BE DESTROYED.

AN EMOTION, WHICH IS A PASSION, CEASES TO BE A PASSION, AS SOON AS WE FORM A CLEAR AND DISTINCT IDEA THEREOF.

An emotion, therefore, becomes more under our control, and the mind is less passive in respect to it, in proportion as it is more known to us.

Everyone has the power of clearly and distinctly understanding himself and his emotions, if not absolutely, at any rate in part, and consequently of bringing it about, that he should become less subject to them. To attain this result, therefore, we must chiefly direct our efforts to acquiring, as far as possible, a clear and distinct knowledge of every emotion, in order that the mind may thus, through emotion, be determined to think of those things which it clearly and distinctly perceives, and wherein it fully acquiesces : and thus that the emotion itself may be separated from the thought of an external cause, and may be associated with true thoughts ; whence it will come to pass, not only that love, hatred, etc., will be destroyed, but also that the appetites or desires, which are wont to arise from such emotion, will become incapable of being excessive. Than this remedy for the emotions which consists



in a true knowledge thereof, nothing more excellent, being within our power, can be devised.

THE MIND HAS GREATER POWER OVER THE EMOTIONS AND IS LESS SUBJECT THERETO, IN SO FAR AS IT UNDERSTANDS ALL THINGS AS NECESSARY.

The more this knowledge, that things are necessary, is applied to particular things, which we conceive more distinctly and vividly, the greater is the power of the mind over the emotions, as experience also testifies. For we see, that the pain arising from the loss of any good is mitigated, as soon as the man who has lost it perceives that it could not by any means have been preserved. So also we see that no one pities an infant, because it cannot speak, walk or reason, or lastly, because it passes so many years, as it were, in unconsciousness. Whereas, if most people were born full-grown and only one here and there as an infant, everyone would pity the infants ; because infancy would not then be looked on as a state natural and necessary, but as a fault or delinquency in Nature ; and we may note several other instances of the same sort. The best we can do, so long as we do not possess a perfect knowledge of our emotions, is to frame a system of right conduct, or fixed practical precepts, to commit it to memory, and to apply it forthwith to the particular circumstances which now and again meet us in life, so that our imagination may become fully imbued therewith, and that it may be always ready to our hand.

For instance, we have laid down among the rules of life, that hatred should be overcome with love or high-mindedness, and not requited with hatred in return. Now, that this precept of reason may be always ready to our hand in time of need, we should often think over and reflect upon the wrongs generally committed by men,

and in what manner and way they may be best warded off by high-mindedness : we shall thus associate the idea of wrong with the idea of this precept, which accordingly will always be ready for use when a wrong is done to us.

If we keep also in readiness the notion of our true advantage, and of the good which follows from mutual friendships, and common fellowships ; further, if we remember that complete acquiescence is the result of the right way of life, and that men, no less than everything else, act by the necessity of their nature : in such case I say the wrong, or the hatred, which commonly arises therefrom, will engross a very small part of our imagination and will be easily overcome ; or, if the anger which springs from a grievous wrong be not overcome easily, it will nevertheless be overcome, though not without a spiritual conflict, far sooner than if we had not thus reflected on the subject beforehand.

We should, in the same way, reflect on courage as a means of overcoming fear ; the ordinary dangers of life should frequently be brought to mind and imagined, together with the means whereby through readiness of resource and strength of mind we can avoid and overcome them.

But we must note, that in arranging our thoughts and conceptions we should always bear in mind that which is good in every individual thing, in order that we may always be determined to action by an emotion of pleasure. For instance, if a man sees that he is too keen in the pursuit of honour, let him think over its right use, the end for which it should be pursued, and the means whereby he may attain it. Let him not think of its misuse, and its emptiness, and the fickleness of mankind, and the like, whereof no man thinks except through a morbidness of disposition ; with thoughts like these do the most ambitious most torment themselves, when they despair of gaining the distinctions they hanker after, and in thus giving vent to

their anger would fain appear wise. Wherefore it is certain that those, who cry out the loudest against the misuse of honour and the vanity of the world, are those who most greedily covet it.

This is not peculiar to the ambitious, but is common to all who are ill used by fortune, and who are infirm in spirit. For a poor man also, who is miserly, will talk incessantly of the misuse of wealth and of the vices of the rich ; whereby he merely torments himself, and shows the world that he is intolerant, not only of his own poverty, but also of other people's riches. So, again, those who have been ill received by a woman they love think of nothing but the inconstancy, treachery and other stock faults of the fair sex ; all of which they consign to oblivion, directly they are again taken into favour by their sweetheart. Thus he who would govern his emotions and appetite solely by the love of freedom strives, as far as he can, to gain a knowledge of the virtues and their causes, and to fill his spirit with the joy which arises from the true knowledge of them : he will in no wise desire to dwell on men's faults, or to carp at his fellows, or to revel in a false show of freedom. Whosoever will diligently observe and practise these precepts (which indeed are not difficult) will verily, in a short space of time, be able for the most part to direct his actions according to the commandments of reason.

## LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING OF GOD

**H**E WHO CLEARLY AND DISTINCTLY UNDERSTANDS HIMSELF AND HIS EMOTIONS LOVES GOD, AND SO MUCH THE MORE IN PROPORTION AS HE MORE UNDERSTANDS HIMSELF AND HIS EMOTIONS.

THIS LOVE TOWARD GOD MUST HOLD THE CHIEF PLACE IN THE MIND.

GOD IS WITHOUT PASSIONS, NEITHER IS HE AFFECTED BY ANY EMOTION OF PLEASURE OR PAIN.

GOD DOES NOT LOVE OR HATE ANYONE.

HE, WHO LOVES GOD, CANNOT ENDEAVOUR THAT GOD SHOULD LOVE HIM IN RETURN.

LOVE TOWARD GOD CANNOT BE STAINED BY THE EMOTION OF ENVY OR JEALOUSY: CONTRARIWISE, IT IS THE MORE FOSTERED, IN PROPORTION AS WE CONCEIVE A GREATER NUMBER OF MEN TO BE JOINED TO GOD BY THE SAME BOND OF LOVE.

THE MORE WE UNDERSTAND PARTICULAR THINGS, THE MORE DO WE UNDERSTAND GOD.

Things are conceived by us as actual in two ways: either as existing in relation to a given time and place, or as contained in God and following from the necessity of

the divine nature. Whatsoever we conceive in this second way as true or real, we conceive under the form of eternity, and their ideas involve the eternal and infinite essence of God.

OUR MIND, IN SO FAR AS IT KNOWS ITSELF AND THE BODY UNDER THE FORM OF ETERNITY, HAS TO THAT EXTENT NECESSARILY A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND KNOWS THAT IT IS IN GOD, AND IS CONCEIVED THROUGH GOD.

THE HIGHEST ENDEAVOUR OF THE MIND, AND THE HIGHEST VIRTUE IS TO UNDERSTAND THINGS BY THE THIRD KIND OF KNOWLEDGE.<sup>1</sup>

IN PROPORTION AS THE MIND IS MORE CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING THINGS BY THE THIRD KIND OF KNOWLEDGE, IT DESIRES MORE TO UNDERSTAND THINGS BY THAT KIND.

FROM THIS THIRD KIND OF KNOWLEDGE ARISES THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE MENTAL ACQUIESCENCE.

WHATSOEVER WE UNDERSTAND BY THE THIRD KIND OF KNOWLEDGE, WE TAKE DELIGHT IN, AND OUR DELIGHT IS ACCOMPANIED BY THE IDEA OF GOD AS CAUSE.

From the third kind of knowledge necessarily arises the intellectual love of God. From this kind of knowledge arises pleasure accompanied by the idea of God as cause, that is, the love of God ; not in so far as we imagine him as present, but in so far as we understand him to be eternal ; this is what I call the intellectual love of God.

GOD LOVES HIMSELF WITH AN INFINITE INTELLECTUAL LOVE.

<sup>1</sup> That is, by intuition.

THE INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF THE MIND TOWARD GOD IS PART OF THE INFINITE LOVE WHEREWITH GOD LOVES HIMSELF.

IN PROPORTION AS EACH THING POSSESSES MORE OF PERFECTION, SO IS IT MORE ACTIVE, AND LESS PASSIVE ; AND, *vice versa*, IN PROPORTION AS IT IS MORE ACTIVE, SO IS IT MORE PERFECT.

BLESSEDNESS IS NOT THE REWARD OF VIRTUE, BUT VIRTUE ITSELF ; NEITHER DO WE REJOICE THEREIN, BECAUSE WE CONTROL OUR LUSTS, BUT CONTRARIWISE, BECAUSE WE REJOICE THEREIN, WE ARE ABLE TO CONTROL OUR LUSTS.

## EPILOGUE

**I** HAVE THUS COMPLETED ALL I WISHED TO SET FORTH touching the mind's power over the emotions and the mind's freedom. Whence it appears, how potent is the wise man, and how much he surpasses the ignorant man, who is driven only by his lusts. For the ignorant man is not only distracted in various ways by external causes without ever gaining the true acquiescence of his spirit, but moreover lives, as it were unwitting of himself, and of God, and of things, and as soon as he ceases to suffer, ceases also to be. Whereas the wise man, in so far as he is regarded as such, is scarcely at all disturbed in spirit, but, being conscious of himself, and of God, and of things, by a certain eternal necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses true acquiescence of his spirit.

If the way which I have pointed out as leading to this result seems exceedingly hard, it may nevertheless be discovered. Needs must it be hard, since it is so seldom found. How would it be possible, if salvation were ready to our hand, and could without great labour be found, that it should be by almost all men neglected?

But all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.













